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# SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

A COMPANION SOURCE-BOOK TO  
*COMPARATIVE RELIGION*

A. C. BOUQUET

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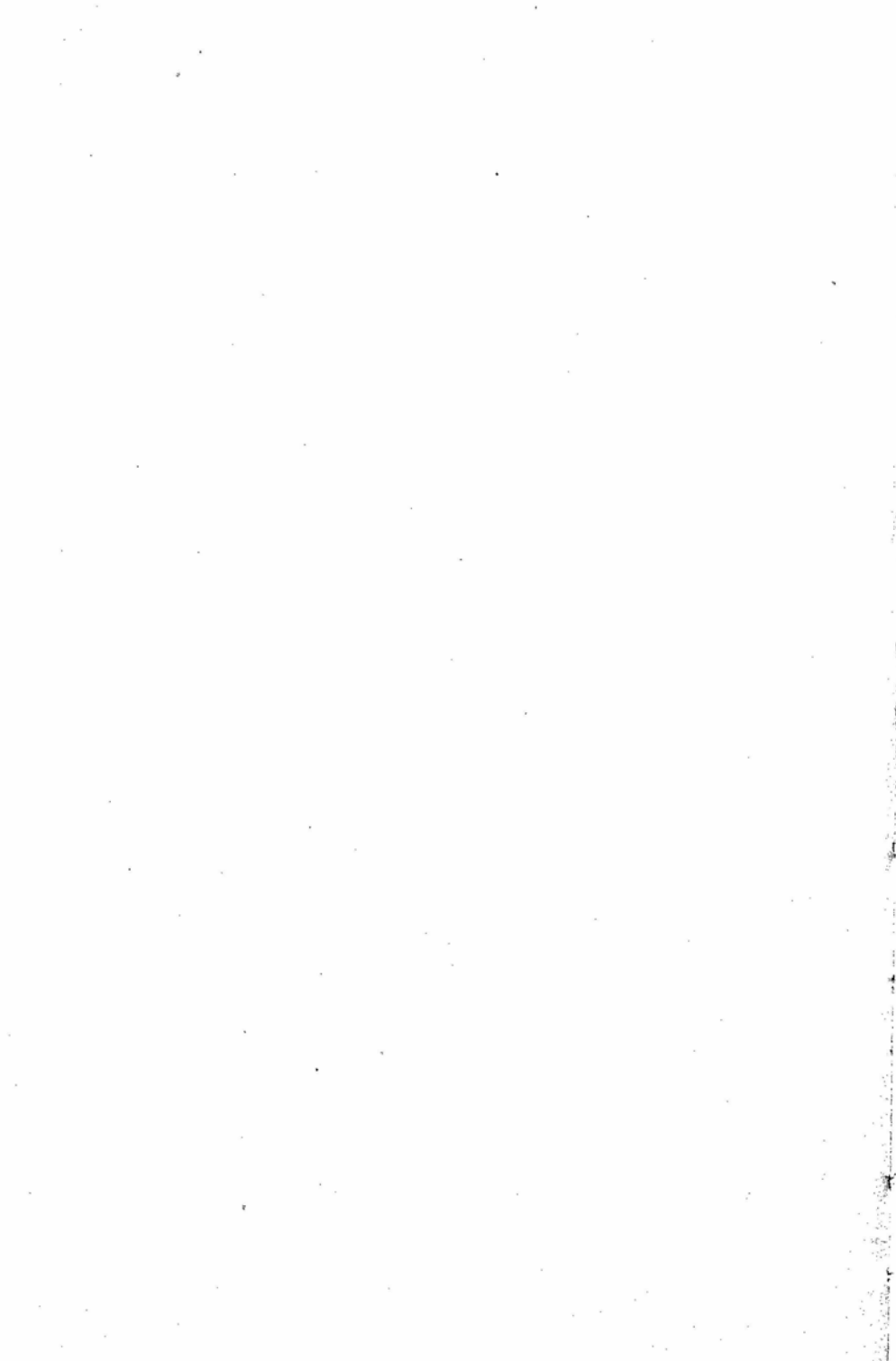
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We have shown that Christ is the Word (*Logos*) of whom the whole human race are partakers, and those who lived according to reason (*logos*) are Christians, even though accounted atheists

JUSTIN MARTYR *Apology* I  
c. 100-165 A.D.

Whatever men have uttered aright... belongs to us Christians; for we worship and love, next to God, the Word (*Logos*) which is from the Unbegotten and Ineffable God.

JUSTIN MARTYR *Apology* II



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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN presenting this volume to readers, I wish to say briefly how vital it seems to me to be that we should avoid trying to understand all religious phenomena by reducing them to their lowest terms. We do not seek to explain the achievements of our great musicians by saying that the Air on the G String and Dvořák's New World Symphony are nothing more than the results of the friction of various pieces of organic matter supplemented by draughts whistling through pipes. Professor Georges Dumézil of Paris has recently written that the scientific study of religion has moved away from concentration upon the somewhat barbarous term *mana* to the more theological term *logos*. There is matter for reflection here.

I desire to express my grateful thanks to all those who have so graciously allowed me to make use of translations. Acknowledgements in detail are given below.

I do not expect to have reproduced everyone's favourite passages, nor can I hope to emulate a larger work such as that of Lehmann and Haas. Much has had to be left out, and only specimens could be given in most cases. Yet something of the same kind as the Leipzig anthology was obviously needed for English readers, and my desire has been to help those who after reading my earlier book, *Comparative Religion*, will want to supplement it, but who at the same time will perhaps have neither the time nor the opportunity to obtain access to libraries where the larger works are available.

I trust that the material given in the pages which follow will convince readers that religion is *ipso facto* neither good nor bad, but that some is rather bad and some exceedingly good, and that we cannot be sure where either the good or the bad is likely to be found. 'The Spirit bloweth where It listeth.'

A. C. BOUQUET

Cambridge, October 1953

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IN making a book of this kind one is naturally dependent upon the goodwill of those who have published translations of the various texts to allow one to reproduce extracts from them. I wish therefore to make with much gratitude the following acknowledgements.

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4. Translations of four passages from *The Sikh Religion* by M. A. Macauliffe.
5. Three hymns from *Enlarged Songs of Praise*, 'O Son of Man' (by permission of Sir Frank Fletcher), 'In Asia born' by Dr Percy Dearmer, 1867-1936, and 'Gather us in' by the Rev. George Matheson, 1842-1906.

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In addition to these I record with gratitude the permission granted by the Board of Trustees of the work of Mary Baker Eddy, Boston, U.S.A., to make quotations of extracts from her work *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*.

Other quotations are from works published so long ago that they have long been out of print for more than the statutory period, or from works published before the two world wars where it has been impossible to get in touch with any person who might have proprietary rights; and in one or two cases the translations are by myself. In all these latter the question of copyright does not arise. If however in performing so complicated a task I have overlooked any matters of this kind which should have been dealt with, I wish to express my regrets, and to tender apologies in advance, with the assurance of my readiness to set matters in order in any subsequent edition.

Parts of this book were delivered as Upton Lectures at Oxford: parts in the performance of my statutory duties at Cambridge.

## INTRODUCTION

It is much easier to understand what the various religions of the world have been like if we are able to take a look at the sort of things that their adherents have said – either in worship, meditation, or preaching. I admit right away that it is necessary in this matter to depend upon translations, since very few of us can know enough languages to be able to read the originals for ourselves. Fortunately translations are in most cases available, and pretty good ones at that, and where opinions differ as to possible renderings I have tried to indicate this in the notes. I have added a sort of running commentary to knit the anthology together, and have tried not only to draw out the meaning of the various extracts, but also to add such information as may increase the interest of the passages quoted.

An additional reason for giving some of the actual texts in English is that there is only too often a tendency on the part of enthusiasts to assign dates and values to them on hearsay, but without ever having read them. Their quality is thus in danger of being underestimated as well as overestimated, and it is often assumed that the translators have found it easy to arrive at the true meaning, which is far from being the case, since some of the texts are capable of very diverse renderings, and must not in any case be modernized, if they are to be judged fairly. This is especially true of the Gathas, the Upanishads, and the proverbial sayings of Confucius.

The work falls naturally into four parts:

In the *first*, I have put fragments which are either of such extreme antiquity that they indicate the attitude of worship adopted by the very ancient peoples who used them, or are survivals recently collected by field-workers among primitive savages, since the latter, we may believe, are in a sufficiently arrested state of development to be able to show us something at least of the worship practised by our early forefathers.

In the *second*, I have given specimens of the more highly developed temple hymns belonging to the ancient polytheisms as well as a few

## INTRODUCTION

liturgical passages, and some early examples of moral instruction and codes of law.

The *third* part illustrates what I have chosen to call the golden age of creative religious development, but what Professor Karl Jaspers of Basel has lately dubbed *the Axial Era*. This covers everything from the greater Upanishads to the close of the New Testament canon.

The *fourth* part may be described as 'post-biblical'. Obviously the chief item in it must be the Qur'ān, but it seems to me that before we get to the latter this is the proper place at which to look at some specimens of the devotional output of later rabbinical and talmudic Judaism. I have therefore begun this section with a few typical passages from the Talmud, followed by some Jewish liturgical material, and by some extracts from the literature of the Chassidim. After the Qur'ān I give some passages from Islamic traditions and mysticism, and selections from the literature of the Sikhs. No great sacred books, apart from collections of hymns, have been produced in recent centuries, though the output of these, both in India and in Christendom, has been immense; but America has seen the compilation of two curious works, the *Book of Mormon* and *Science and Health*, both of which claim to be interpretations of the Bible. We may not rate them very highly, but it is only just to say that the denominations which use them value them as the expression of sacred and revealed truth. I have therefore included an extract from each. I have also added some passages from nineteenth-century Japanese Sect-Shinto writings. These should be of interest as showing how a new sort of canonical monotheistic literature may arise in a milieu hitherto polytheist.

I wish most emphatically to disclaim any intention of seeking to compile a 'Bible of the World'. My sole object is scientific: the illustration, in effect, of the different types of religion which I have described in my previous work. Any valuation of the quality of the passages must be left to the reader's own judgement.

*How did writing begin?* It has sometimes been asserted that any script tends to be sacred – that is to say, to be thought of as having supernatural properties. Not many folk in antiquity, and few even up to the nineteenth century, were able to write, or to read what others have written, and written characters certainly have power not

## INTRODUCTION

merely as reproducing by symbols the sound of the human voice or the forms of living creatures, but also as inciting to action. But this judgement must needs be modified. The origin of written symbols is often secular. Quite probably it goes back to the making of pottery, when artefacts were marked with signs indicating the manufacturer or owner of the object in question. Script of any sort as such seems to have had a utilitarian or commercial quite as much as a religious origin, and there is no evidence in the ancient civilizations of the Indus valley, of Mesopotamia, or of China that writing was restricted to or specifically associated with religious purposes.

*Sacred writing.* Having said that, one can admit that much ancient writing is connected with sacred affairs, events, and persons. This is presumably in the main due to the fact that religion is such a strong motive force in human life; not perhaps as strong as the urges of sex and hunger, but very strong nevertheless. Literacy, both in ancient and modern times, has been closely associated with religion. The Jain community in India has the highest percentage (among non-Christians) of persons able to read and write. The temples in ancient Sumeria, and in Burma the Buddhist monasteries, have in the past performed the task of the elementary school; while in Europe elementary education was carried on by the Church long before it was taken in hand by the State. In Tibet there is still no word meaning 'literature' other than 'religious literature'.

This may well have led in some cases to a separate script (if not language, or, at least, dialect) being employed for religion. The word 'hieroglyphic' does not, after all, mean any sort of queer writing, but writing employed by *hiereis* or priests. It is a Greek word, and is specially used to describe the priestly form of script used in Egypt, which first became familiar in 1801, when the well-known Rosetta stone was acquired by the British Museum. This stone has three sorts of writing on it: at the top a priestly inscription; below, a version of the same in 'demotic', or the script used by the Egyptian lay population; and thirdly, a rendering of the same into Greek. But the Rosetta stone is not very ancient (at most not earlier than 198 B.C.). We can go back more than three thousand years behind that, and find quite distinctly developed sacred literature in Egypt and also in Mesopotamia.

## INTRODUCTION

The smallest and earliest sacred writings were probably little more than sentences, sometimes inscribed on tablets of baked clay, sometimes on earthenware bowls, sometimes on stones, sometimes on the walls of buildings. They may have been answers given by sacred men and women on behalf of a deity (earlier than but similar to the oracles of Apollo at Delphi, or the leaves of the Cumaean Sibyl). Or they may have been prayers, invocations, or charms, carefully composed by the proper professional sacred man or woman whose business it was to make such things.

As the centuries pass, longer and more varied types of religious literature begin to emerge:

(1) *Hymns* or collections of hymns.

(2) *Records of myths* (*muthoi*), or tales of events having a sacred significance, such as the stories of the Creation and the Deluge in Mesopotamia, or in Hellas the alleged acts of a god, which were recited on festal occasions and anniversaries by *prophētai*, who were attached to the temples.

(3) *Liturgies*, or written forms of prayer (the earliest known being, as far as can be judged, those current in Mesopotamia about 2600 B.C.).

(4) *Codes of law*. King Khammurabi of Mesopotamia (c. 2100 B.C.) claimed to have received his code from Shamash, the Sun-god; and the story of Moses in Exodus is familiar.

(5) *Sacred dramas*. The earliest we know anything about is a kind of fertility play of Egyptian origin, fragments of which survive on a stone in the British Museum, and which are a copy of an older document which may be dated about 3400 B.C. Some of the tablets discovered at Ras Shamra in Syria may contain similar compositions. We know that much Greek tragedy is of religious origin, and even to this day dramatic representations take place in Chinese and Japanese temples.

As ethnic crosses over into higher and prophetic religion, the character of the sacred literature tends to become modified. The hymns have an increasingly ethical tone; the theology becomes more philosophical, or at any rate less naïve. Discourses, wise sayings, sermons, aphorisms, interpretations of history, and even letters of instruction all come to have their place.

The most ancient highly developed sacred literatures of which

## INTRODUCTION

we have any direct knowledge are those of the Sumerians in Mesopotamia, the early Egyptians, and the Chinese. Sir Leonard Woolley tells us how 'men and women, trained in the Sumerian temples, lived on in them as religious scribes, making fresh copies of the ancient texts stored in the library of the god, preparing the "books" for the temple services, hymns, litanies, and so on. ...'\*

*What is a sacred book?* Presumably we mean a piece of literature long enough to merit the name of 'book', the recital or private perusal of which fosters, fortifies, or revives the original *experiences* or *activities* connected with a specific religious belief. The character of any sacred book is mainly determined by the consideration whether it is employed in the service of religion proper or of magic. Books of ritual or of spells are mainly magical, even if those who use them will not admit it. The words must be accurately recorded and correctly repeated, otherwise the desired result will not follow. To ensure that the deity addressed will be propitious, the recitation must be word-perfect. Hence the sentences must be most carefully memorized or read out from a carefully prepared manuscript,† and if a slip is made, there will have to be a fresh start from the beginning. (I take for granted here the definition that magic is concerned with obtaining power over deity and compelling deity to do what one wants, while religion is concerned with establishing a proper relationship with deity, whose control over human beings is admitted, and whose claims in some higher or prophetic religions are regarded as uncompromisingly moral.)

It seems then that just as worship in general may be objective or subjective, so the use of a sacred book may be both objective and subjective: (1) objective entirely, when used in the *magical* way;‡‡ (2) objective and subjective as well, when used for *religious* purposes, since to secure the favour of a god the worshippers must, by their use

\* From *The Sumerians*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1928.

† As at the Chinese Altar of Heaven.

‡‡ St Augustine's 'tolle lege' seems to imply the existence of magical, superstitious, or oracular consultations of the (verbally inspired?) sacred text as far back as the fourth century, and of course John Wesley knew the practice. It is said that the idea of a verbally inspired sacred canon belongs to Judaism, from which it is transferred to Christianity, though in itself it is a sub-Christian idea.

## INTRODUCTION

of the sacred literature, bring themselves into such a state of mind and heart that the god will grant them their petitions; (3) subjective entirely perhaps when the reader of the sacred book seeks divine information and desires doctrinal enlightenment as an end in itself.

If the religious belief in question be based upon certain alleged historical events, then some account of these events will be sure to form a prominent part of the sacred book attached to the belief. This would account for the Gilgamesh-epic and the stories of Creation and Deluge which were found in a great library of baked clay tablets in Assyria. We may also think of such a book as providing a rule of life, or declaring a doctrine about the nature of deity; and these matters will certainly be part of the standard literature of any highly developed religion. But before everything else, the object of such a sacred book is to extend and stimulate a special religious experience, so that those who attend to it become, by reading it or hearing it read, sharers in the actual experiences or activities, whether objective worship or subjective meditation, which produced it and caused it to be written.

By far the largest amount of sacred literature consists of hymns, that is to say, of lyrical addresses to Deity; lyrical because a poem of the form called lyric with short rhythmical lines, set to be sung to a musical instrument, is the natural form of emotional approach to Deity. Once these lyrics are collected they form in themselves a sacred book, and the chanting of the latter induces a state of consciousness in the believer which is precisely what is required in order to conform to the standard attitude expected by the god or goddess. When adulatory, it is of course centred upon human interests, and verges upon the magical. The Vedic hymns are estimated to number 1,028, and it is likely that the collections of hymns in the Sumerian or Egyptian temples were equally large. It would be difficult to say how many hymns our Christian collections of recent years contain, but the total must be immense, and many favourites lie outside such collections. The *bhakti* hymns of India also number thousands. John Wesley describes the Methodist hymn book, with its hundreds of hymns, as 'a little body of experimental and practical divinity'.

Another type of sacred book is the prophetic or didactic. Here the collection consists of sermons, aphorisms, proverbs, or outpourings

## INTRODUCTION

such as George Fox would have called 'openings' (e.g. 'thus He shewed me...'). Sometimes, as in the Buddhist Sutras, the form is that of a sermon or discourse set in a kind of standard framework. Sometimes it is that of a chain of sayings, not necessarily connected or coherent, but joined together like miscellaneous beads on a string, simply because they contain the same keyword or thought. This form is found in the prophecies of Isaiah, in the *Lun-yü* (Analects, or *obiter dicta*) of Confucius, in many of the Hindu Upanishads, in the teaching portions of the Christian Gospels, and at any rate in some of the longer chapters (Suras) of the Qur'ân, as well as in the new scriptures of the Japanese Konko Kyo sect.

The historical or narrative sacred book seems almost entirely confined to Hebrew and Christian circles, a fact which will engage our serious attention. Almost the only similar books outside the Bible are the *Ramayana* in India (which is the sacred book of a Hindu minority, and is non-canonical to strict Brahmins); the life of Apollonius of Tyana; and the folk-tales of the life of the Buddha.

*One further introductory point.* A sacred book is hardly ever a complete and well-finished whole, composed by a single author. It is usually a library or compilation containing a miscellany of passages which have come to be valued as contributing to the renewal of experience. Even such a book as the *Bhagavadgita* of India, though now circulating as a complete entity, is really only a single canto in the vast Indian epic of the *Mahabharata*, and has itself undergone much editing and expansion. In a few cases a religious leader has produced a single more or less complete sacred book for the express and avowed purpose of propagating his or her faith. (Examples of such are the Book of *Revelation* in the New Testament, the *Shepherd* of Hermas, Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon*, Mrs Eddy's *Science and Health*, and the Qur'ân of Mohammed. Perhaps we might add the writings of John Bunyan as well.) The quality and sincerity of some of these may be called in question, but there can be no doubt that anyone who approaches them in a submissive and receptive frame of mind is likely to be carried away by the rhetoric, and to form thought-associations and mental images which will have exactly the effect desired by the original author. He will be filled with the precise kind of emotion which his teacher wants him to have.



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A sacred book, I repeat, is not expected to be intellectually grasped, taken as a whole or in sentences. So long as it is *felt*, its work is largely done. Thus an ordinary village congregation cannot be expected to understand Isaiah xl, or some of the obscurer parts of the minor prophets, or even the more difficult parts of the Pauline Epistles, nor can we suppose that an unsophisticated gathering of Moslems understands all the allusions in the turgid utterances of a long Sura. But behind each passage stands the prophet or apostle, and the congregation receives the impression of the intense earnestness of someone who believed in the-Living God.\* The passage conveys a sense of overwhelming faith, and ministers grace to the hearers. The religious community which sets its seal upon any standard collection of sacred literature is guided in its selection by custom and emotion rather than by the cold light of reason, and it is in most cases the community, the fellowship of believers, which does this, rather than a single individual. The Qur'ān is perhaps the exception, and even here the community may have influenced its final recension.

\* The situation is even more acute when one considers the reading of the Gospels in public to-day. Scientific criticism of the text, the sources, and the forms in which the tradition took shape make the study of these documents more delicate and difficult than it has ever been. As yielding a general and faithful impression of the Person of Christ the documents can be said to stand the test, and so to minister to the faith of the reader and hearers, but as yielding the materials for what has been called 'plain biography', they are not capable of direct and popular use, but only give results of such a kind to trained and reverent experts, and then not as full as ardent seekers might expect. The transition from oral to written tradition was effected only on the basis of devotional and theological needs, and we have to search behind it for the brute facts, which perhaps can never be significant without an act of faith. Only those who are not acquainted with the criticism mentioned above can seriously question this statement.

## PART ONE

### § 1

#### PRIMITIVE CHANTS

WE have been thinking so far in terms of *written* records of a sacred nature, and this is a long way from the beginning of any activity which could be called religious. The earliest creatures that could merit the name 'human being' were of course completely illiterate, and the only sacred words they knew and used were never committed to any form of script, even a pictographic one. Such words may have become stereotyped, and then memorized, but not more than that. Yet memorizing was the first step on the way to the formation of a liturgy, and although we do not know what 'noises-with-meaning' our rude ancestors made, we do know what 'liturgical sounds' people make to-day in those parts of the world where they seem to exist in a state of arrested development.\* In some of these primitive chants are often to be found already the standard features of hymnody – assonance, parallelism, metre, and division into stanzas – though it may be argued that to the extent to which these are found, to that extent the chants are not really and truly archaic.

The communal chants of the Australian blackfellows are the expression of a kind of 'sea-shanty' religious rite, in which a vague Power is secured, and yoked for a specific purpose, by the whole group chanting together. Sir Baldwin Spencer quotes one of these chants which is employed for the purpose of inducing rain, and it sounds like some child's sing-song. He does not say what the meaning was, and perhaps he was not told, but even if the Australians did not

\* We have no record as yet of the 'noises-with-meaning' made by the Australian medicine man mentioned by Windells in his book on the Lascaux paintings, but it may well be that they were of the same order as those uttered by the prehistoric savages who frequented Lascaux in bygone ages, since the motif of the Australian rock-paintings is said to be similar to that of those discovered in the South of France.

know, that does not compel us to conclude that the syllables were merely onomatopoeic, or due to explosions of emotion. It is often found that the meaning of an ancient liturgical phrase has been forgotten, or that it has been preserved in an archaic language because of its supposed potency, but that its exact significance has been lost.

Here then is the rain-chant, which was intoned to the accompaniment of rattled boomerangs, with at intervals an imitation of the call of the plover as it is heard before rain:

Dad a da da

Dad a da da

Dad a da da

Da kata kai

Ded o ded o

Ded o ded o

Ded o ded o

Da kata kai

Sometimes the address is more articulate, but this, as we might expect, implies that the Supernatural is being thought of as quasi-personal. Thus the Chenchus, a jungle-tribe of Hyderabad State, after they have killed an animal during a hunt, cut off a small piece of the hind-leg, or a scrap of the liver, roast it on the spot, and then throw it into the jungle, with the words:

Memu, tinturam, niwu tinu.

Our Mother, we eat, You eat.

This is perhaps the shortest articulate prayer on record, and it is standard and stereotyped. On returning home a longer prayer is recited:

Our Mother, without your favour we could not get anything. To You therefore we say Thank you.

Heiler translates an American Indian chant which furnishes a good example of primitive chiasmus:

O good Spirit, give us buffalo, buffalo, buffalo, fat buffalo  
give us, O good Spirit.

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He also quotes an archaic prayer to Zeus which reads as though it were meant to be sung to a melody from one of Benjamin Britten's operas:

*ῥσον, ῥσον, ὦ Φίλε Ζευ, κατὰ τὰς ἀρούρας τὰς τῶν Ἀθηναίων.*

Rain, rain, O dear Zeus, rain upon the cornfields, the fields of the Athenians.

We must not suppose that all primitive hymns were chanted. The appropriate 'noises-with-meaning' may have been made with some instrument,\* not only to attract the attention of the Supernatural Being, but to give that Being Information.

Here again we have to depend upon survivals, and one of the most striking, though not necessarily of course a very early one, is the drummed hymn addressed to Nyakopon, a West African sky-god, which was recorded and translated by Captain Rattray during his stay in Ashanti only a few years ago. It is well known that Africans have drum-sounds in lieu of words, by which they send messages to one another, and it is of course by this primitive device that news is spread with a rapidity which has often astonished Europeans. What more natural than that Africans should use the same device to communicate with the Supernatural?

Here then is Rattray's rendering of the hymn:

The sky is wide, wide, wide,  
The earth is wide, wide, wide.  
The one was lifted up,  
The other was set down,  
In ancient times, long, long ago.  
Supreme Sky-god, upon whom men lean and fall not,  
We serve You.  
When the Sky-god shows you anything,  
May you profit by it.  
If we wish white, we get it.

\* This practice persisted up to the Christian era in Egypt, where the sistrum, a jangling instrument making a sound rather like a jingle of sanctus-bells, was used in temples, and seems to have been taken over by the Church.

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If we wish red, we get it.  
Him upon whom we lean and do not fall,  
God, good morning.  
The fowl crowed in the morning,  
The fowl has awakened and crowed,  
Very early,  
They are addressing Me and I shall understand.\*

The following two simple hymns are given by Heiler† as illustrating the non-literary primitive type, in contrast with the more elaborately constructed temple hymns and the literary hymns composed by individuals. The first of these is a rhythmical prayer which was in use among the Khoikhoi, who are racially a cross between Bushmen and Bantus. There is no reason to suppose any Christian missionary influence. The name of the deity addressed is Tsuigoa.

Thou, O Tsuigoa,  
Thou, Father of fathers,  
Thou art our Father.

Let the thunderclouds stream [with rain],  
Let our herds live,  
Let us live.

Truly I am weak  
With hunger and thirst;  
O that I might eat the fruits of the earth.

\* It will be seen that there is a change of speaker, and also a change of the person addressed, during the course of this hymn, just as (to take a familiar example) there is in the second of the canonical Hebrew psalms. The first seven lines may be taken as directed towards the Sky-god himself. The next four seem to be addressed by the priest-drummer to the congregation. In the next two the god is again addressed. The last four seem to represent the reply of the god himself. The whole thus forms a sort of dramatic dialogue which in process of time has no doubt become stereotyped, and which is now repeated, possibly without any idea on the part of the congregation as to its real meaning to some extent because it is traditional, and thought to be appropriate, but also because it is expected to have a magical effect on the behaviour of the god himself.

† In *Das Gebet*, pp. 158-9 (German [1923] edition).

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Art thou not our Father,  
The Father of fathers,  
Thou Tsuigoa?  
O that we might praise Thee,  
O that we might requite Thee,  
Thou Father of fathers,  
Thou, O Lord,  
Thou Tsuigoa.

The second is a harvest-song in use among the Kekchi Indians of the North American continent:

Thou, O God my Lord,  
Thou my Mother, Thou my Father,  
Thou Lord of hill and valley.  
Now, after three suns, after three days,  
Shall I begin to gather my maize  
Before Thy mouth, before Thy face.  
A little of Thy food and drink give I to Thee.  
It is almost nothing, that which I give to Thee,  
But I have plenty and good  
Of my own food and drink;  
Thou hast revealed it to my soul and to my life:  
Thou my Mother, Thou my Father.  
I begin therefore the harvest,  
But I am not this day ready for the harvest  
Without Thy word, and without Thy countenance.  
Who knows how many suns, how many days I reap?  
It is no quick matter to harvest from among the weeds.  
I can only complete it slowly.  
Who knows still when I can speak to Thee,  
Thou my Mother, Thou my Father,  
Thou celestial one, Lord of hills and valleys?  
I will again speak to Thee:  
Wherefore not, my God?

All these are memorized. The Navaho Indians of New Mexico have preserved literally hundreds of hymns which reside in the capacious memories of their chanters. Indeed, one of the principal qualifications of a chanter would seem to be the possession of a retentive memory.\*

It is when we come to the hymns of urban cultures that we for the first time encounter the beginnings of sacred literature in script. I shall deal with most of these in the next section of this book, but there is one extraordinary example which lies perhaps on the border-line. In any case it deserves a section to itself.

### § 2

#### THE HYMN OF THE ARVAL BRETHREN

From the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century A.D., discoveries were continually being made of inscriptions which purported to give the minutes of the meetings for ceremonial purposes of a very ancient Roman priesthood, the *Fratres Arvales* or Arval Brethren. Nobody quite knows when it was founded, but it persisted certainly up to the time of the Emperor Gordian in A. D. 241. Membership of the corporation was highly aristocratic and was limited to twelve. Vacancies were filled by the votes of the members themselves, and only persons of high rank and great wealth were eligible. In some respects it was in fact like a very exclusive masonic lodge. Yet in spite of the undoubted social side of its activities, it preserved and maintained an ancient ritual which must have belonged to the days when the Romans were in their habits more on the level of the Nagas of Assam or the Dyaks of Borneo. In the year A.D. 218 a full account of this ritual appears in the minutes. From it we learn that the annual festival occupied four days, with three of them, the first, third, and fourth, taken up with ceremonies. Those of the third day were the most important, and were held at a temple in a sacred grove outside the city of Rome, when a whole series of sacrifices was offered, including two young sows, a heifer, a lamb, incense, and wine. The object of these seems to have been to secure the favour of a mother-

\* See Miss Gladys Reichert's *Navaho Religion* (2 vols, Bollingen Publication. U.S.A., 1950).

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goddess, Dea Dia, and to ensure a good harvest both of corn and of vintage. After the various offerings had been made, and a sort of communion meal had been eaten, the priests themselves were solemnly shut up in the temple, and having girded up their garments, they proceeded to engage in a ceremonial dance, chanting the while a hymn in archaic Latin, the meaning of which they possibly did not understand, but which had evidently been handed down to them unchanged from remote antiquity, and the correct recitation of which was no doubt held to be extremely efficacious in obtaining the desired result. Here is the hymn, as quoted in the minutes:

Enos Lases juvate, enos Lases juvate, enos Lases juvate.  
neve luerve Marmar, sins incurrere in pleores [*thrice*].  
satur fu, fere Mars, limen sali sta berber [*thrice*].  
semunis alternei advocapit conctos [*thrice*].  
enos Marmar juvato [*thrice*].  
Triumpe triumpe triumpe triumpe triumpe.

To anyone who knows only classical Latin, a good bit of this must look like nonsense, but it certainly was not that. There is some doubt as to which parts of it are rubric and which hymn, but a very fair rendering of it into metrical English was made some years ago by the Victorian classical scholar John Wordsworth:

Help us, O Lares, help us, Lares, help us.  
And thou, O Marmar, suffer not  
Fell plague and ruin's rot  
Our folk to devastate.  
Be satiate, O fierce Mars, be satiate.  
(Leap o'er the threshold. Halt. Now beat the ground.)  
[*thrice repeated.*]  
(Call to your aid the heroes all. Call in alternate strain.)  
[*thrice repeated.*]  
Help us, O Marmar, help us, Marmar, help us.  
(Bound high in solemn measure, bound and bound again.  
Bound high and bound again.)



Wordsworth's bracketing of the passages which he takes to be rubrics may be called in question, but the interpretation at any rate makes good sense, and 'sta berber', i. e. 'stand, blow or beat' (*verbere*), is remarkably like the prosaic ritual instructions which Professor A. C. Moule has heard repeated in the Confucian temples in China, by the master of the ceremonies, for the benefit of the officiating local mandarin. *Enos* is archaic for *nos*, and *Lases* for *Lares*, so that the initial invocation is of the household gods. *Triumpe*, like the Greek *θολαυβος*, is an onomatopoeic refrain, probably the same word as 'tramp', and indicates a ritual march or procession. *Marmar* seems to be an archaic duplicated form of *Mars*.

The day's proceedings concluded with a banquet, chariot- and horse-racing, and performances by tumblers. On the morrow there was a final sacrifice, held in a house in Rome, at which boy-attendants carried consecrated grainstalks to the altar of *Dea Dia*. It seems clear that we have here a combination of two sacrifices, one to *Mars*, the other to the goddess. What is interesting in connexion with the present work is the care with which the Romans kept the records of their sacred rites, and especially the information in these records that there were 'song-books' or liturgies handed to the priests by their slaves, from which they chanted the prayers, and especially the hymn quoted above.

An alternative suggestion about the hymn-ceremony made by a Continental scholar is that the god was imagined to be shut up in the temple with his worshippers, and coerced into granting their requests by being kept a prisoner. In this case the obscure rubrics might have been addressed to him as threatening requests to stand on the threshold and perform some act which would fertilize the soil. But this can only be conjecture. It makes the ceremony magical rather than religious, but it is of course in harmony with what we find sometimes occurring among savages to-day, and it is rather like the action of the inhabitants of an Italian fishing village, who, when the catches were poor, took the statue of their patron saint down to the beach and put it well out in the breakers, with the motif no doubt of the Irish servant-girl who, having lost a coin, stood the image of *her* patron saint on its head with the remark: 'That'll larn him.'

## PART TWO

MAN's life takes a great step forward when he begins to dwell in towns and cities rather than in villages, and also when he begins to invent scripts of various kinds in which to record items of importance. It does not follow that urban civilization immediately involves written records, since it would appear that the sacred compositions of early Indian religion remained in a state of oral transmission for many centuries, while those of the Central American peoples seem to have been set down in a rather crude pictographic script right up to the time of the Conquistadors. Nevertheless it is in the great temples of highly developed polytheism that we appear to get the first sacred libraries. Sir Leonard Woolley tells us that there certainly were such in Sumeria, and we know that they existed on a considerable scale in Egypt, while traces of one have been discovered at Ras Shamra in Syria. We do not know of anything of the kind in the Harappa civilization of early India, and it does not seem very likely that there was any temple literature. As Piggott says,\* the script is essentially pictographic, and although it seems to have employed a total of some 400 characters, no inscription of more than twenty or so is known.

The great bulk of the literature of temple libraries consists of hymns and liturgical pieces, although in Egypt and at Ras Shamra fragments have been discovered of sacred dramas, while in Egypt there are also a few attempts at dogmatic theology, and some moral treatises occur both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt. What else may turn up as time goes on it is not easy to predict, since the deposits of clay tablets in Iraq and of papyri in Egypt are full of surprises. For some years we have been familiar with sacred tablets found in Mesopotamia, the contents of which bear an analogy to parts of the Old Testament.

In Part Two therefore I shall give the following items:

1. A Sumerian sacrificial hymn to the goddess Ishtar.
2. A so-called penitential psalm.

\* *Prehistoric India*, p. 179 (Pelican Books).

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3. A liturgical fragment from Uruk.
4. Extracts from the prologue and epilogue to the Code of Khammurabi, together with some parts of the code itself.
5. An extract from the Babylonian Great Epic, and from the Gilgamesh-Epic, giving part of the Babylonian Flood-story.
6. A Sumerian prayer to the Moon-god.
7. A number of specimen passages from Egyptian temple-collections.
8. Extracts from the collection of Aztec hymns made by the Portuguese Sahagun.
9. A Peruvian hymn to the Supreme God.
10. A hymn to Apollo (from the so-called Homeric hymns).
11. Some typical specimens of hymns from the *Rig-Veda*.
12. A short description of the Great Kiao, the famous annual sacrifice performed in China right up to the year 1910 by the Emperor in person, at the Altar of Heaven in Peking, including specimens of the fine hymns which were sung on that occasion.

### 91

## SUMERIAN HYMN TO THE GODDESS ISHTAR (EXTRACT)

Thee, O Virgin, I sanctify, thee with song I praise.  
Butter, boiled milk, and seven baked cakes,  
Upon the table of the land of Sumer I heap up.  
Dark wine I pour out to thee.  
White wine I pour out to thee.  
Dark wine, ulusin beer,  
Unto my lady, ulusin beer.  
To present to her, liquor steadying the heart,  
Causing songs of adoration, I have caused to be brought.

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To cause thee to be appeased, honey, butter, and sparkling liquor,

To cause thee to repose, honey [?], butter, and dark [?]  
liquor,

Black bread, honey, butter and...

Sparkling wine... I pour out to thee.

To cause the god of man to partake of the meal for the soul  
of the dead I bring them to thee.

Thee, O Virgin, I sanctify, thee with song I praise,

My lady in heaven and earth I behold.

Unto holy Innini – into her presence I come.

The lady of protection, Innini who is majestic,

Maid of heaven [? I extol]

The lady of protection, the goddess who is great...

The great temple, house of god [?], I have made for thee,

The great temple of the river-goddess, the Lusubgu, whom  
the dark-headed people of Sumer worship with fear.

In the above there are a few ambiguous words and one or two lacunae, but in the main the sense is quite clear. The epithets with which Ishtar is addressed strike a strangely familiar note to those who are acquainted with Mediterranean Catholicism, but one must beware of laying too much stress upon this. In the original language the similarity might not seem as strong as in a version made by an English-speaking scholar, probably with a Christian background.

## 92

### A BABYLONIAN PENITENTIAL PSALM

O that the anger of my lord's heart would be pacified!

O that the god who is unknown would be pacified!

O that the goddess who is unknown would be pacified!

O that the god known or unknown would be pacified!

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

O that the goddess known or unknown would be pacified!  
O that the heart of my god would be pacified!  
O that the heart of my goddess would be pacified!  
O that the god or goddess known or unknown would be  
pacified!  
O that the god who is wroth with me would be pacified!  
O that the goddess who is wroth with me would be pacified!  
The sin which I have committed I know not,  
My misdeeds I know not.  
May my god name a favourable name!  
May my goddess name a favourable name!  
May the god known or unknown name a favourable name!  
May the goddess known or unknown name a favourable  
name!  
Clean food have I... eaten,  
Clean water have I... drunk.  
The unclean..., my god, have I unwittingly eaten,  
Upon the impure..., my goddess, have I unwittingly  
trodden.  
O lord, my sins are many, great are my transgressions,  
O my god, my sins are many, great are my transgressions,  
O my goddess, my sins are many, great are my transgressions,  
O god, known or unknown, my sins are many, great are  
my transgressions,  
O goddess, known or unknown, my sins are many, great are  
my transgressions.  
The sins I have committed I know not.  
The transgressions which I have committed I know not.  
The unclean that I have eaten I know not.  
The impure on which I have trodden I know not.

\*

The lord in the anger of his heart has looked on me,  
The god in the fury of his heart has encompassed me.

## PART TWO

The goddess who has become angry with me and brought me into pain.

A god, known or unknown, has oppressed me.

A goddess, known or unknown, has brought sorrow upon me.

I sought for help, but no one took me by the hand,

I wept, but no one came to my side,

I broke forth into lamentations, but no one hearkened unto me.

Full of sorrow, I am overpowered and cannot look up.

To my compassionate god I turn, proclaiming my sorrow.

The feet of my goddess I kiss, and...

To the god, known or *unknown*,\* I proclaim my sorrow.

To the goddess, known or *unknown*, I proclaim my sorrow.

O lord, look upon me, accept my sighing!

O goddess, look upon me, accept my sighing!

O god, known or *unknown*, ...

O goddess, known or *unknown*, ...

How long, my god...

How long, my goddess...

O god, known or *unknown*, may thy angered heart be pacified!

O goddess, known or *unknown*, may thy angered heart be pacified!

Mankind is perverse, and no one has understanding.

Among all who are, who knows anything?

Whether they do evil or good, no one has knowledge.

\* Readers will be interested to notice the references to the 'unknown god'. This is precisely in line with the episode recorded in Acts xvii. A mishap was usually attributed to the displeasure of some deity, and to know the name of that deity was important, because the knowledge gave one an element of power over the god or goddess. If however the identity of the *numen* could not be ascertained, it was then necessary to use a formula of an 'omnibus' character, to cover all possible 'acts of god'. (Insurance policies, like other things, seem to have their roots in the dim and distant past.)

O lord, do not cast aside thy servant.

Prostrate in the watery morass he lies, take hold of his hand!

The sins which I have committed, change to grace!

The transgressions which I have committed, let the wind  
carry away!

My many iniquities, tear asunder like a garment!

My god, my sins are seven times seven, forgive me my sins!

My goddess, my sins are seven times seven, forgive me my  
sins!

O god, known or *unknown*, my sins are seven times seven,  
forgive me my sins!

O goddess, known or *unknown*, my sins are seven times seven,  
forgive me my sins!

Forgive me my sins, and I will humble myself before thee.

May thy heart be pacified, as the heart of the mother that  
has given birth!

May thy heart be pacified as that of a mother who has given  
birth, as that of a father who has begotten a child!

¶ 3

LITURGICAL DIRECTIONS FROM URUK FOR THE  
PROCESSION OF A STATUE OF A GOD  
AT URUK (AKKADIAN)

... after the [statue of the] god Anu has left the chapel [called] Enamenna and has reached the Exalted Gate, all the masmasu-priests shall recite three times the incantation [entitled] 'Sarru ittasa'. The Masmasu-priests shall [then] stop [reciting], and the urigallu-priest, the masmasu-priests, the eribbiti-priests, and the brewers – who are harnessed to the cross-beam [supporting the moving statue of Anu] – shall bless Anu with the blessing [entitled] 'Anu rabū šamē u ersetu likrubūka' –

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and so on, for seven more paragraphs, ending with:

The following is the blessing with which the urigallu-priest, the masmasu-priests, the eribbiti-priests and the brewers – who are harnessed to the cross-beam – shall bless Anu seven times, on the way to the Akitu House from the Resh House:

Great Anu, may heaven and earth bless you!

May the deities Enlil, Ea, and Beletile bless you joyfully!

May both the gods Sin and Shamash bless you when you appear!

May the deities Nergal and Sibi bless you with firm hearts!

May the Igigi gods of heaven and the Anunnaki gods of earth bless you!

May the gods of the Deep and the gods of the Holy Shrine bless you!

May they bless you daily [every] day, month, and year!

That this text was preserved as sacred, in order that the same form of ritual and prayer might be used again and again, is clear from the colophon attached to it, which says:

Copied from an old tablet, verified and collated. Copy of an old tablet which is the property of the [temple of] Anu and Antu. [This] tablet belongs to Anahaushabshi, the son of Kidinanu, the descendant of Ekurzakir, the masmasu-priest of Anu, and Antu, the urigallu-priest of the Resh temple, citizen of the city of Uruk, &c.

The procession of a sacred statue of a divinity on a car is part of the customary worship of many lands which possess a certain type of culture. It occurred in Egypt, where the images were sometimes taken on boats on the Nile or on a lake; it is a regular practice in parts of India and the Hindu districts of Ceylon; and it is also a part of the older Shinto cultus in Japan. I possess photographs of a number of the still existing ceremonies of this sort.



## THE CODE OF KHAMMURABI

This was discovered by a French archaeologist in 1901. It is inscribed on a block of black diorite, and on one side of this is a representation in relief of the king receiving the commandments from Shamash the Sun-god. Khammurabi himself is believed to be the Amraphel of Genesis xiv. 1, and his date has been given as about 2130-2088 B.C. The connexion between his code and the laws of the Hebrews is probably indirect, but the interest lies in the attribution of both to a divine bestowal.

Four extracts are here given:

(i) Part of the prologue, from which it appears that Khammurabi declares himself to reign by divine permission, though it is clear that his religion is polytheistic, and that the permission is that of a plurality of divine persons.

(ii) Laws relating to the practice of surgery (State-interference with the medical profession is evidently very ancient. Here we see a fixing of fees, and, still more drastic, severe penalties for bungling an operation).

(iii) State control of agriculture, including the scale of wages.

(iv) Divine anathemas upon the sovereigns who fail to observe and enforce the code.

Similar codes have been found in other deposits. One, the Laws of Eshnunna, is pre-Khammurabi, and also contains a reference to Shamash. Others, from middle-Assyrian, neo-Babylonian, and Hittite tablets, seem to be purely secular, but of course the recordings may be incomplete.

## LAW IN GENERAL

As limitation of space forbids me to give any other extracts from ancient codes of law, it may be as well to note at this point the general relations which have prevailed between law and religion.

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Ancient peoples, it has been said, almost without exception regarded their laws as of divine origin. Thus in Egypt the gods were held to be the source of the laws which governed the life of the people. In Greece Demosthenes said that every law is a discovery and gift of 'theos' (whatever he meant by that). Cicero among the Romans said that law was nothing other than right reason derived from the divinity of the gods (*a numine deorum*), and indeed the very foundation of Roman law has always been the belief that man-made laws were derived from a perfect law emanating from the Divine Mind. Hence the distinction between *fas*, or Divine law, and *jus* or human regulations. The Jews had no less than seven synonyms for law, which shows the importance they attached to it, and of course they believed that Yahweh was its source. In India the Laws of Manu (dateable 200 B.C.—A. D. 200) are an immense code in twelve volumes, and obviously could not have come into existence until after writing was possible, but although they are conditioned by the religious beliefs of Hinduism, and accept the doctrine of *samsara* or transmigration as essentially connected with the punishment of wrongdoing and the reward of virtue, they cannot be said to accept the idea that law is bestowed by a transcendent Power, since they are controlled by the customary combination of polytheism with monistic pantheism. Although relatively late in date, they contain much early matter. Manu is declared to be a quasi-divine being who is the parent of the human race. The exaltation of the Brahmin caste in it is staggering. Brahmins are said to be lords over everything in the world, and are to be treated as god-like beings. Even at the age of ten a Brahmin is to be venerated. Brahmins are immune from capital punishment — the worst penalty for them is banishment. Brahmins are the residuary legatees of all property to which there are no natural heirs, and treasure-trove belongs to them. It is true they have very exalted duties, and must in theory observe a very high standard of conduct. Indeed the ethics of the Manu code seem to show Buddhist influence. Nevertheless the Laws of Manu display sacerdotalism at its peak of extravagance. It is odd that Nietzsche, who had only studied these laws superficially, praised them for delivering society over to the sway of the *optimi*, the philosophers and warriors, who are to hold the common people in their grasp — in fact for being an instance of early

Fascism. In this he was not wholly right, since, as Schweitzer says, Manu's Law Book takes up the cause of the weak against the strong, and orders the strong to serve. It is not really on the side of Hitler and the Will to Power.

FROM THE CODE OF KHAMMURABI

(i) *Prologue*

When the lofty Anu, King of the Anunnaki, and Enlil, lord of heaven and earth, he who determines the destiny of the land, committed the rule of all mankind to Marduk, the chief son of Ea; when they made him great among the Igigi; when they pronounced the lofty name of Babylon; when they made it famous among the quarters of the world and in its midst established an everlasting kingdom whose foundations were firm as heaven and earth – at that time, Anu and Enlil called me, Khammurabi, the exalted prince, the worshipper of the gods, to cause justice to prevail in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil, to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak, to go forth like the Sun over the Black Head Race, to enlighten the land, and to further the welfare of the people. Khammurabi, the Governor named by Enlil, am I, who brought about plenty and abundance; who made everything for Nippur and Dirilu complete...&c.

(ii) *State control of surgery*

If a physician operate on a man for a severe wound [or make a severe wound upon a man] with a bronze lancet and save the man's life; or if he open an abscess [in the eye] of a man with a bronze lancet and save that man's eye, he shall receive 10 shekels of silver [as his fee].

If he be a freeman, he shall receive 5 shekels.

If he be a man's slave, the owner of the slave shall give 2 shekels of silver to the physician.

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If a physician operate on a man for a severe wound with a bronze lancet and cause the man's death; or open an abscess [in the eye] of a man with a bronze lancet and destroy the man's eye, they shall cut off his fingers.

If a physician operate on a slave of a freeman for a severe wound with a bronze lancet and cause his death, he shall restore a slave of equal value.

If he open an abscess [in his eye] with a bronze lancet, and destroy his eye, he shall pay silver to the extent of one-half of his price.

If a physician set a broken bone for a man or cure his diseased bowels, the patient shall give 5 shekels of silver to the physician.

If he be a freeman, he shall give 3 shekels of silver.

If it be a man's slave, the owner of the slave shall give 2 shekels of silver to the physician.

### (iii) *State control of agriculture*

If a man hire a man to oversee his farm and furnish him with seed-grain<sup>5</sup> and entrust him with oxen and contract with him to cultivate the field, and that man steal either the seed or the crop and it be found in his possession, they shall cut off his fingers.

If he take the seed-grain and overwork the oxen, he shall restore the quantity of grain which he has hoed.

If he let the oxen of the man on hire, or steal the seed-grain and there be no crop in the field, they shall call that man to account, and he shall measure out 60 *gur* of grain per *gan*.

If he be not able to meet his obligation, they shall leave him in that field with the cattle.

If a man hire a field-labourer, he shall pay him 8 *gur* of grain per year.

If a man hire a herdsman, he shall pay him 6 *gur* of grain per year.

If a man steal a watering-machine in a field, he shall pay 5 shekels of silver to the owner of the watering-machine.

If a man steal a watering-bucket or a harrow, he shall pay 3 shekels of silver.

If a man hire a herdsman to pasture oxen or sheep, he shall pay him 8 *gur* of grain per year.

(iv) *Epilogue*

In the days that are yet to come, for all future time, may the king who is in the land observe the words of righteousness which I have written upon my monument! May he not alter the judgements of the land which I have pronounced, or the decisions of the country which I have rendered! May he not efface my statues! If that man have wisdom, if he wish to give his land good government, let him give attention to the words which I have written upon my monument! And may this monument enlighten him as to procedure and administration, the judgements which I have pronounced, and the decisions which I have rendered for the land! And let him rightly rule his Black Head people; let him pronounce judgements for them and render for them decisions! Let him root out the wicked and evildoer from his land! Let him promote the welfare of his people!

Khammurabi, the king of righteousness, whom Shamash has endowed with justice, am I. My words are weighty; my deeds are unrivalled. ...

If that man pay attention to my words which I have written upon my monument, do not efface my judgements, do not overrule my words, and do not alter my statues, then will Shamash prolong that man's reign, as he has mine, who am king of righteousness, that he may rule his people in righteousness.

If that man do not pay attention to my words which I have written upon my monument; if he forget my curse and do not

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fear the curse of god; if he abolish the judgements which I have formulated, overrule my words, alter my statues, efface my name written thereon and write his own name; on account of these curses, commission another to do so – as for that man, be he king or lord, or priest-king or commoner, whoever he may be, may the great god, the father of the gods, who has ordained my reign, take from him the glory of his sovereignty, may he break his sceptre and curse his fate!

### 95 A

#### THE BABYLONIAN CREATION-EPIC

The tablets of this were discovered in the ruins of the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh in 1873. They are not complete, but enough remains to show that the creation of an ordered universe was believed to be due to the victory of Marduk, the supreme god of Babylon, over Tiamat, a deity of chaos and darkness.

The following passages show the general line of the description, and may be compared with the Vedic hymn on page 94, and with the Hebrew account in Genesis i. No connexion can be established between the Vedic hymn and the other two, but the Hebrew account is probably a monotheistic adaptation of the Babylonian. The latter is regarded as dating from the twenty-second or twenty-third century B.C.

#### Tablet 1

When above the heaven was not yet named,  
And the land beneath bare no name,  
And the primeval Apsu [abyss] their begetter,  
And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both –  
Their waters were mingled together,  
And no field\* was formed, no marsh was to be seen;  
When of the gods still none had been produced,  
No name had yet been named, no destiny yet fixed;  
Then were created the gods in the midst of heaven. ...

\* Speiser renders 'no reed hut'.

## Tablet 5

He [Marduk] made the stations for the great gods,  
 As stars resembling them he fixed the signs of the zodiac,  
 He ordained the year, defined divisions,  
 Twelve months with stars, three each he appointed. ...  
 He caused the moon-god to shine forth, entrusted to him  
 the night;  
 Appointed him as a night body to determine the days.

The polytheistic character of the above is fairly clear, but it is rather curious to find that Marduk is the creator of the other gods, who, although secondary to him, are still apparently supernatural beings. (This is also alleged to be the case with Ptah, the Egyptian creator-god.) Myths of this character occur in script in Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic (Ras Shamra in Syria), as well as in Egyptian records. They appear all to be polytheistic. The extract given above is said to be Akkadian.

## § 5 B

## THE BABYLONIAN FLOOD-STORY

This occurs in the eleventh canto of the Gilgamesh-epic. The latter is a most ancient (? Sumerian) poem which narrates the exploits of a Mesopotamian hero called Gilgamesh, from the city-state of Uruk. The principal event in the career of the latter is his quest for the secret of immortality, which shows how oppressed his generation was with the barrier of death. Gilgamesh goes to his kinsman, Ut-Napishtim, to ask for the secret, and Ut-Napishtim tells him the story of the flood. Its resemblance to the story of Noah will be evident to anyone, but the Babylonian version is completely polytheistic, and depicts the gods as at variance with one another. There is no unitary control of the world, but some deities are malevolent and others beneficent.

The extracts here given speak for themselves. The tablets from which they are taken were also discovered in the ruined library of the palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh by the late George Smith. It may

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be added that Gilgamesh eventually obtains the herb, which is to endow him with immortality, from the depths of the sea, by attaching stones to his feet, thus enabling him to dive. But on his way home he stops to drink at a spring, and while he is drinking, a serpent devours the precious herb, and so steals the gift of immortality. The myth has again obvious affinities with the story of the serpent in Genesis iii, but it is a very different version of the tale.

It should be added that there are a number of ancient poems about Gilgamesh in various languages of the Middle East. The poem about the Flood is found in Old Babylonian and Assyrian recensions, and in a fragmentary form in Hittite and Hurrian versions, too scrappy for continuous translation.\*

I put on board all my family and relatives,  
The cattle of the field, the beasts of the field,  
Craftsmen all of them, I put on board.  
A fixed time had Shamash appointed [saying]:  
'When the ruler of darkness† [?] sends a heavy rain in the  
evening,  
Then enter into the ship, and shut thy door.'  
The appointed time arrived,  
The ruler of darkness† at eventide sent a heavy rain.  
The appearance of the weather I observed,  
I feared to behold the weather,  
I entered the ship and shut my door.  
To the ship's master, to Puzur-Amurri, the boatman,  
The great structure [i. e. the ship] I handed over with its  
goods.  
When the first light of dawn appeared  
There came up from the horizon a black cloud,  
Adad in the midst thereof thundered,  
While Nabû†† and Sharru†† [i. e. Marduk] went before.

\* Main translation by P. S. P. Handcock (pub. S.P.C.K.).

† Speiser renders: 'He who orders unease at night'.

†† The names vary in rendering.



They passed like messengers over mountain and plain,  
 Nergal tore away the anchor-cable [?].  
 Ninib goes on, the storm he makes to descend.  
 The Anunnaki lifted up their torches,  
 And with their brightness they lit up the land.  
 The raging of Adad reached into heaven,  
 All light was turned into darkness.  
 It [flooded] the land like...  
 One day the tempest...  
 Hard it blew and...  
 Like an onslaught in battle it rushed in on the people.  
 No man beheld his fellow,  
 No longer could men know each other. In heaven  
 The gods were dismayed at the flood,  
 They retreated, they went up to the heaven of Anu.  
 The gods cowered like dogs, they crouched by the walls. ...  
 ... For six days and nights  
 The wind blew, the flood, the tempest overwhelmed the  
 land.  
 When the seventh day drew near, the tempest, the flood,  
 ceased from the battle in which it had fought like a host.  
 Then the sea rested and was still, and the wind-storm and  
 the flood ceased.  
 When I looked upon the sea, the uproar had ceased,  
 And all mankind was turned to clay.  
 The tilled land was become like a swamp.  
 I opened the window\* and daylight fell upon my face.  
 I bowed myself down and sat a-weeping;  
 Over my face flowed my tears.  
 I gazed upon the quarters [of the world] – terrible [?] was  
 the sea.  
 After twelve† days, an island arose,

\* Speiser: 'a hatch'.

† Var. 'in each of fourteen regions'.

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To the land of Nisir the ship took its course.  
The mountain of the land of Nisir held fast the ship, and  
suffered it not to stir.  
One day, a second day, did the mountain of the land of  
Nisir hold it fast and suffered it not to stir,  
A third day, a fourth day, did the mountain of the land of  
Nisir hold it fast and suffered it not to stir.  
A fifth day, a sixth day, did the mountain of the land of  
Nisir hold it fast and suffer it not to stir.  
When the seventh day drew nigh.  
I sent forth a dove and let her go,  
The dove went to and fro,  
But there was no resting-place, and she returned.  
Then I sent forth a swallow and let her go,  
The swallow went to and fro,  
But there was no resting-place, and she returned.  
Then I sent forth a raven and let her go.  
The raven flew away, she beheld the abatement of the  
waters,  
And she came near, wading and croaking, but did not  
return.  
Then I sent everything forth to the four quarters of heaven,  
I offered sacrifice,  
I made a libation on the peak of the mountain.  
By sevens I set out the vessels,  
Under them I heaped up reed and cedar-wood and myrtle,  
The gods smelt the savour,  
The gods smelt the sweet savour,  
The gods gathered like flies about him that offered up the  
sacrifice.  
When at length Bêlit-ilâni\* drew near,  
She raised the great jewel which Anu had made according  
to her wish [and said]:

\* The great goddess Ishtar.

'These gods – by the lapis-lazuli upon my neck – I will not forget!

These days will I bear in mind, and never more forget!

Let the gods come to the offering,

But let not Enlil come to the offering,

Forasmuch as he took no counsel, but caused the flood,

And delivered my people to destruction.'

¶ 6

A SUMERIAN PRAYER TO THE MOON-GOD

From an Assyrian translation of it inscribed on a tablet in the Nineveh gallery at the British Museum in London. (Quite a number of these Assyrian tablets are versions of Sumerian originals. The whole prayer is much longer, but the extract given below shows that the doctrine which lies behind it is monolatrous yet not monotheistic.)

Who is supreme in heaven? Thou alone art supreme. Who is supreme on earth? Thou alone art supreme. Thy will is made known in heaven and the spirits thereof bow low before thee. Thy will is made known upon earth and the spirits thereof kiss the ground before thee. ... Thy mighty word createth right and ordaineth justice for mankind, and thy powerful ordinance reacheth unto the uttermost parts of heaven and earth. Who can know thy will and who can dispute it? O Lord, thy sovereignty is in heaven and upon earth! Among the gods thy brethren there is none who is like unto thee, O thou king of kings whose judgements are inscrutable and whose divinity is unsurpassed.

## EGYPTIAN TEMPLE-LITERATURE

The exposition of the literature of ancient Egypt would need a volume to itself. Workers in this field in recent years have been able, from a rich store of material which has been rescued and translated, to piece together something of the development of Egyptian religious thought over a period which covers thousands of years. Naturally dating is difficult, and nothing approaching completeness can be expected in dealing with what are often fragmentary texts, while we can have no exact knowledge of what has been irretrievably destroyed. What remains however is enough to make us extremely chary of saying positively what the ancient Egyptians may *not* have thought.

The extracts here given must therefore be regarded only as *specimens* of the material available:

(i) The earliest known hymn to the Sun-god, probably in use during the first half of the third millennium B.C.

(ii) A fragment of an ancient religious drama (which may be compared with similar dramatic fragments discovered at the ancient Syrian site of Ras Shamra – Ugarit).

(iii) A fragment of a theological document which was originally written on papyrus, probably about 3400 B.C., and then transcribed on to stone in the eighth century B.C. because it was felt too important to be allowed to perish.

(iv) A hymn to the Sun-god, composed about 1412 B.C.

(v) A ritual for offering food.

(vi) Stanzas from an alleged monotheistic hymn.

(vii) An address to Aton, Aten, or Atum – the Sun-god under a new name – which may embody fragments of the liturgy used by the reforming Pharaoh, Akhenaton, in his new temple at Tell-el-Amarna.

(viii) Extracts from moral discourses.

The last two items may be thought to belong properly to the fringe of the next section, but they are included at this point because so far as

dating goes they do not seem actually to come within the limits of the Axial Era.

The reader must be cautioned that translations of these hieroglyphic texts vary a great deal. Not only have they been made from different papyri, which have not so far been collated, so that different readings occur which have not apparently been assessed (some papyri omit whole passages which occur in others), but also different translators have different ways of treating the hieroglyphs, and it is evidently far from certain what the originals meant. We ought to be careful not to see in them what we would like them to mean, and it is easy to put passages into Biblical English, and thereby to give the idea that they are more like the Bible texts than is really the case.

(i) *The earliest known hymn to the Sun-god, c. 3500 B.C.\**

Hail to thee, Atum!

Hail to Thee, Kheprer!

Who himself became [or 'self-generator'].

Thou art high in this thy name of 'Height',

Thou becomest (*hpr*) in this thy name of 'Beetle' (*hpr*).

Hail to thee, Horus-eye [Egypt],

Which he adorned with both his arms.

He permits thee [Egypt] not to hearken to the westerners,

He permits thee not to hearken to the easterners,

He permits thee not to hearken to the southerners,

He permits thee not to hearken to the northerners,

He permits thee not to hearken to the dwellers in the  
midst of the earth,

But thou hearkenest unto Horus.

It is he who has adorned thee,

It is he who has built thee,

It is he who has founded thee.

Thou doest for him everything that he says to thee

In every place where he goes.

\* Translation by Weigall.

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Thou carriest to him the fowl-bearing waters that are in thee;

Thou carriest to him the fowl-bearing waters that shall be in thee.

Thou carriest to him every tree that is in thee.

Thou carriest to him every tree that shall be in thee.

Thou carriest to him all food that is in thee.

Thou carriest to him all food that shall be in thee.

Thou carriest to him the gifts that are in thee,

Thou carriest to him the gifts that shall be in thee.

Thou carriest to him everything that is in thee,

Thou carriest to him everything that shall be in thee.

Thou bringest them to him,

To every place where his heart desires to be.

The doors that are on thee stand fast like Inmutef,

They open not to the westerners,

They open not to the easterners,

They open not to the northerners,

They open not to the southerners,

They open not to the dwellers in the midst of the earth,

They open to Horus.

It was he who made them,

It was he who set them up,

It was he who saved them from every ill which Set did to them.

It was he who settled (*grg*) thee,

In this thy name of 'Settlements' (*grg-wt*).

It was he who went doing obeisance (*nyny*) after thee,

In this thy name of 'City' (*nwt*)

It was he who saved thee from every ill

Which Set did unto thee.

(ii) *The dramatic papyrus of the Ramesseum*

This remarkable document represents a drama of which forty-six scenes are extant. It was apparently composed for performance at the accession to the throne of Sesostri I, and has come down to us in a MS. dateable towards the end of the twelfth dynasty. Sethe says that it breathes the spirit of the greatest antiquity, both in words and content. Even if, therefore, it happens to have been found among archives of the period of about 2000 B.C., it can hardly be *later* than the time of Sesostri I. Sethe describes it as a festival play of a ceremonial character, the elements of which are patient of a symbolic interpretation in which the mysteries of religion are involved.

Each scene is preceded by what we should call stage-directions, and the dramatis personae are well-known supernatural beings, Horus, Thoth, Seth, Osiris, and so on. To this extent it resembles the dramatic fragments found in recent years by French archaeologists at Ras Shamra, though the myth enacted seems to be a different one. With the details of these myths we need not concern ourselves greatly, but in general they appear to be concerned with the fertility cycle in nature, with the alternation of life and death, germination and harvest, and so with the continuance of the means of life. It may well be that the enactment of these plays was believed to be a means of promoting the regularity of the cosmic sequence. Ritual on earth often seems to link itself with cosmic events. The daily performance of the *Sandha* rite by the Brahmin is believed to be a necessary safeguard to ensure the regular rising and setting of the sun, on which man's welfare depends. So the performance of sacred dramas at stated intervals may have been held to stimulate, by a process not far removed from that of sympathetic magic, the recurrence of the seasons with their gifts. In the case of this Egyptian play, Sethe thinks that internal evidence shows that it was probably taken on tour round the principal cities, partly as an item in the festival connected with the accession of the Pharaoh, partly as a means of extending the religious ceremony throughout the provinces, the king appearing by proxy in the play, personified by one of the players.

The sentences spoken by the various actors are brief, crude, and devoid of any of the literary skill which is displayed in such great

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Greek dramas as the *Prometheus Vincit* of Aeschylus. They are simple and archaic, and remind one of the lines spoken in the popular village plough-plays of Europe (which of course had a religious or at any rate magical significance in the promotion of fertility), and also to some extent of the mystery and morality plays of the Middle Ages.

The whole point is that sacred literature of this kind has a very long history, and that the ancestry of such plays as *Everyman* or the York cycle is of the greatest antiquity.

Two scenes are here transcribed from Sethe's translation. Readers will probably not make much of them, partly because the text is mutilated and obscure, partly because we cannot pretend to understand all the allusions. Sethe often restores lacunae from similar passages in other scenes.

A much later dramatic text of the Ptolemaic period, c. 300 B.C. from Edfou, has been published by Messrs. Blackman and Fairman in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* for 1942, and commented upon in a monograph by M. Étienne Drioton (Cairo, 1948, *Le Texte dramatique de Edfou*), so the practice of composing religious dramas in Egypt evidently persisted for some millennia. The Ptolemaic text may of course be a copy of a much more ancient original.

### Scene 19

#### *Entry of the milkmaids and the butchers*

It came to pass that a pair of milkmaids were ushered in.  
Horus addresses his children.

HORUS (speaking to his children): Ye shall fill my house upon  
earth with my eye. (The children of Horus) (The pair of  
milkmaids)

HORUS (speaking to Thoth): They must bring it themselves.  
(The children of Horus) (The two butchers)

HORUS (speaking to the children of Horus): I have protected  
you. (The children of Horus) (The offspring of the king)

HORUS (speaking to the children of Horus): ... lay on the  
ground.



## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### Scene 23

#### *The delivery of the cornelian necklace*

It came to pass that a cornelian necklace was brought in. Horus takes his eye again from Seth.

HORUS (addressing Seth): I have taken my eye which is thy cornelian stone. (Thy eye) (A cornelian)

HORUS (addressing Seth): Turn thy back, if they have looked askance at thee. (The two eyes) (Two cornelian stones) (Two so-called human bellies) (The domicile of Thoth)

HORUS (speaking to Seth): Bring me my eye, which was cornelian-red for thee, which was blood-red in thy mouth. (The red eye) (The...?) Letopolis.

All that we can conjecture from the above is that the sacred drama consisted of a large number of what must have been little more than tableaux, in which no long speeches were made – in fact a series of crude and rather childish mumming-plays. The chief speaker in these two scenes is the god Horus, and according to a commonly accepted myth, Horus was blinded by the storm-god, Seth. This blinding was no doubt caused by lightning, and Letopolis, the word which occurs in the end of the scene, was the name of the Thunder-bolt city in Egypt, specially connected with a myth about the blindness of a god. The idea of blindness being inflicted by a storm-god is found in parts of Africa to this day. The drama is therefore concerned here with a conflict between two divine beings in which the return of the eye by the one to the other is symbolized by the handing over of a cornelian stone. The connexion with fertility-rites is not obvious and needs explanation, again from Africa. Rainmaking is a necessity in a parched climate, and rainmakers are supernatural persons, either priests or gods. But a rainmaker risks being struck by lightning, and if he is not skilful, he may get blinded. In this drama Horus, who is the god of the bright sky, has been overcome and blinded by Seth, the god of the storm, and the restoration of his eye is only part of the cosmic cycle of fine weather following a storm.

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### (iii) *A fragment of early theology from Memphis*

In the eighth century B.C. an Egyptian Pharaoh, Shabako by name, found in the temple of the god Ptah at Memphis a worm-eaten papyrus, the contents of which he considered to be of such value that he had it recopied upon stone. The original document is estimated to have been of a date somewhere approaching 3400 B.C., so that the king's care in thus preserving its contents has enabled us to read a constructive attempt on the part of an Egyptian priest of the fourth millennium before Christ to make a synthesis of the complex religious beliefs of his day. Of course we must not suppose that he really thought of a 'god of the whole world', in our sense of the term. 'The whole world' to him was only the Nile valley, and he knew of little beyond it. But we may take his efforts to be the first known attempt at a *dogma* of creation, as distinct from the *myth* of creation such as we find in the early document from Mesopotamia given on page 47. It was at Heliopolis that, as far as we know, an attempt was made to group a number of gods into an ennead. But the Memphitic theologian goes a step further and declares that the great-god Ptah has eight emanations or manifestations of himself. Ptah is the master-craftsman of the gods, but Atum, the Sun-god, is the actual creator, so that Ptah's relation to Atum is not unlike that of the Logos in Hellenistic theology to God the Father.

The following extracts will show that the world is conceived as first existing and taking shape in the thought of the god, and then issuing into form by the utterance of his tongue. Again it is to be noted that Ptah is regarded as responsible for bringing into existence the other gods, just as Marduk is in Babylon. It may be added that the stelē on which Shabako's inscription is cut is now in the British Museum in London.

Part of the MS. is in the form of a sacred drama, as in the case of the papyrus of the Ramesseum.

It came to pass that heart and tongue gained the power over every member, teaching that he [Ptah] was [in the form of the heart] in every breast and in the form of the tongue in every mouth, of all gods, all men, all cattle, all reptiles, all living

creatures, while he [Ptah] thinks and while he commands everything which he desires. ... It is he [the heart] who causes that every conclusion should come forth, it is the tongue which announces the thought of the heart. ... He fashioned all gods, even Atum and his ennead. Every divine word came into existence by the thought of the heart and the commandment of the tongue. It was he who made the *kas* and [created] the qualities; who made all food, all offerings, by this word; who made that which is loved and that which is hated. It was he who gave life to the peaceful and death to the guilty.

It was he who made every work, every handicraft, which the hands make, the going of the feet, the movement of every limb, according to his command, through the thought of the heart that came forth from the tongue.

There came the saying that Atum, who created the gods, stated concerning Ptah-tatenen: he is the fashioner of the gods, he from whom all things went forth, even offerings, and food and divine offerings and every good thing. And Thoth perceived that his strength was greater than all gods. Then Ptah was satisfied, after he had made all things and every divine word.

The translation of such a text cannot be easy, partly because it is made from a copy of a much older document, and may (and probably does) contain copyist's errors, partly because ancient idiom is difficult to reproduce in modern English, but from the works of Erman and Breasted one can get an approximate idea of what the early Egyptian theologian was striving to express, and it is plain that he was already dissatisfied with mere folk-mythology, and was engaged in working out some unitary conception of creation.

The rendering given here is from Weigall, but the most recent translation by J. A. Wilson (in Pritchard's collection), in spite of variations, gives much the same meaning. Both translators think they see in the passage an early approach to a Logos-doctrine.

(iv) *Hymn to the Sun-god, est. c. 1412 B.C.*

Hail to thee! Re, lord of Truth,  
 Whose sanctuary is hidden, lord of gods,  
 Khepri in the midst of his barque,  
 Who commanded and the gods became;  
 Atum, who made the people,  
 Who determined the fashion of them,  
 Maker of their sustenance.  
 Who distinguished one colour [race] from another;  
 Who hears the prayer of him who is in captivity,  
 Who is kindly of heart when one calls upon him,  
 Who saves the timid from the haughty,  
 Who separates the weak from the strong,  
 Lord of Knowledge, in whose mouth is Taste;  
 For love of whom the Nile comes,  
 Lord of sweetness, great in love,  
 At whose coming the people live.

Sole likeness, maker of what is,  
 Sole and only one, maker of what exists.  
 From whose eyes men issued,  
 From whose mouth the gods came forth,  
 Maker of herbs for the cattle,  
 And the tree of life for mankind,  
 Who makest the sustenance of the fish [in] the stream,  
 And the birds that 'traverse' the sky,  
 Who givest breath to that which is in the egg.  
 And makest to live the son of the worm,  
 Who makest that on which the gnats live,  
 The worms and the insects likewise,  
 Who suppliest the needs of the mice in their holes,  
 Who sustainest alive the 'birds' in every tree.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

Hail to thee, who hast made all these,  
Thou sole and only one, with many arms,  
Thou sleeper waking while all men sleep,  
Seeking good things for his cattle.  
Amon, enduring in all things,  
Atum-Harakhte,  
Praise to thee in all that they say,  
Jubilation to thee, for 'thy tarrying with us',  
Obeisance to thee, who didst create us,  
'Hail to thee,' say all cattle;  
'Jubilation to thee,' says every country,  
To the height of heaven, to the breadth of earth,  
To the depths of the sea.

Save me,  
Shine upon me,  
For thou makest my sustenance.  
Thou art the sole god, there is no other,  
Even Re, who dawneth in the sky,  
Atum maker of men,  
Who heareth the prayers of him who calls to him,  
Who saveth a man from the haughty,  
Who bringeth the Nile for him who is among them,  
Who leadeth – for all men,  
When he riseth, the people live,  
Their hearts live when they see him  
Who giveth breath to him who is the egg,  
Who maketh the people and the birds to live,  
Who supplieth the needs of the mice in their holes,  
The worms and the insects likewise.

Praise to Amon!  
I make hymns in his name,  
I give to him praise,  
To the height of heaven,

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And the breadth of earth;  
I tell of his prowess  
To him who sails down-stream,  
And to him who sails up-stream.

Beware of him!  
Repeat it to son and daughter,  
To great and small,  
Tell it to generation after generation,  
Who are not yet born.  
Tell it to the fishes in the stream,  
To the birds in the sky,  
Repeat it to him who knoweth it not  
And to him who knoweth it.  
Beware of him.

Thou, O Amon, art the lord of the silent,  
Who comest at the cry of the poor.  
When I cry to thee in my affliction,  
Then thou comest and savest me.  
That thou mayest give breath to him who is bowed down,  
And mayest save me lying in bondage.  
Thou, Amon-Re, Lord of Thebes, art he,  
Who saveth him that is in the Nether World...  
When men cry unto thee,  
Thou art he that cometh from afar.

### (v) *From Egyptian Rituals and Incantations*

Dated in the First Intermediate Period, c. 2400 B.C.

*A ritual for offering food\**

(Words to be spoken:) 'O Osiris King Nefer-ka-Re, take to thyself the Eye of Horus. Lift thou it to thy face.' [A lifting of bread and beer.]

\* Translation by J. A. Wilson (in J. B. Pritchard's collection).

(Lifting before his face. Words to be spoken:) 'Lift thy face, O Osiris. Lift thy face, O this King Nefer-ka-Re, *whose state of glory has departed*. Lift thy face, O this King Nefer-ka-Re, honoured and keen, that thou mayest look at that which came forth from the. ... Wash thyself, O King Nefer-ka-Re. Open thy mouth with the Eye of Horus. Thou callest thy *ka*, like Osiris, that it may protect thee from all wrath of the dead. O King Nefer-ka-Re, receive thou this thy bread, which is the Eye of Horus.' [Laid on the ground before him.]

In the above the King is identified with Osiris, and the worshipper's offerings with 'the eye of Horus'. But the offering is as much a mortuary gift to a deceased monarch or ancestor as any in China. The meaning of 'whose glory has departed' is obviously that the king is dead. The significance of 'the eye of Horus' is that, according to the myth, Horus the dutiful son gave his eye in fighting on behalf of his father. So to be a dutiful son was 'to give the eye of Horus'. What appear to be liturgical rubrics are put in parentheses.

#### ALLEGED EGYPTIAN MONOTHEISM

Our reconstruction of Egyptian religion must always be subject to revision, since the period to be covered is vast, and our knowledge fragmentary. So much has been said about the achievements of Akhenaten,\* and the possible ideas of his predecessors, that it is as well to point out that to determine the meaning of the term *pā nēter*, or Deity, some 4,000 years ago in Egypt is almost as difficult as if some 4,000 years hence someone in Africa were to try to evaluate the meaning of the word G-O-D in England in 1951, with (as his only data) a Festival of Britain sermon by the Archbishop of Canterbury, of which the beginning and end were missing, part of a leading article

\* It is considered by some that a good deal of exaggerated nonsense has been talked about Akhenaten, who may really have been a sickly youth in the hands of his relatives. But the fact of his attempted religious revolution seems undoubted, although the scraps of documents which we possess show it as not unlikely that there was a good deal of monotheistic speculation and propaganda long before his time.

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from the *Daily Worker*, a few poems attributed to Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon, some odd pages of *Songs of Praise*, and a tattered copy of Martin Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy*, all from a ruined bomb-site of which the date was doubtful. The most that it is possible to say about the papyri of which extracts are given below is that the dating is the best available at the present time, and represents the mature opinion of some of our best Egyptologists, while the views expressed in the documents can only be said to show that there were, approximately about that time, people who held such views. How many of them there were, how much influence they wielded, and whether their beliefs were regarded by the majority of Egyptians as orthodox or representative, or only a local or individual affair, is quite a different matter.

I give in a footnote\* for the convenience of readers a table of the main dates of Egyptian history. It will be seen at once what an immense period of time is involved. I also give the dating of the extracts according to experts, the main point being that if the earliest extant Hebrew prophet, Amos, be put at about 760 B.C., all this Egyptian material is earlier.

### \* Table of Principal Egyptian Dates and Periods

Prehistoric or pre-Dynastic Period.

Archaic Period, beginning about 3300 B.C. Dynasties I-III.

Old Kingdom or Pyramid Age (Dynasties IV-VI), beginning about 2900 B.C.

First Intermediate Period, beginning about 2400 B.C. (Dynasties VII-X).

Middle Kingdom (Dynasties XI-XIV, including Dynasty XII, about 2000 B.C.).

Hyksos Period (Dynasties XV-XVI), about 1788-1580 B.C.

Dynasty XVII.

New Kingdom (Dynasties XVIII-XXII), comprising:

First Empire, about 1580-1321 B.C.

Second Empire, about 1321-1205 B.C. (Dynasty XIX.)

Second Empire, about 1205-1100 B.C. (Dynasty XX.)

The Priest-kings, about 1100-950 B.C. (Dynasty XXI.)

The Libyans, about 947-720 B.C. (Dynasty XXII.)

Ethiopians (Dynasty XXV), about 745-650 B.C.

Renaissance (Dynasty XXVI), about 663-525 B.C.

Conquest of Egypt by the Persians, 525 B.C.

Last native King of Egypt, Necho II, 359-342 B.C.

Alexander the Great takes possession of Egypt, 332 B.C.

Dynasty XXXIII, Ptolemies, 305-30 B.C., ending with Cleopatra, after which

Egypt becomes a Roman province until the Arab conquest in A.D. 640.



Tradition describes Moses as learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians. We know very little historical about Moses, but his name has been said to be Egyptian in form (Mosheh) and it is not inconceivable that he may have owed his religious influence to contact with Egyptians, from whom he derived ideas which came to fruition in Hebrew prophetism. That perhaps is as much as it is safe to say.

The extracts given here are: (vi) an alleged monotheistic hymn; (vii) a number of passages from what is usually called Egyptian Wisdom-literature, i.e. proverbial maxims, always prudential, but sometimes not entirely secular, but introducing the name of a deity as (so to speak) the Lord of Conduct. The word for this literature in Egyptian was *sebayit*,\* 'teaching from the past', and our only reason for thinking that the theology behind it was not exceptional is that the maxims appear to have been copied and recopied again and again as school-books and children's copybooks, from which it may be inferred that the sentiments in them met with general approval and were part of the conventional and traditional teaching of succeeding generations.†

(vi) *Stanzas from an alleged monotheistic hymn*

In praise of the great god of Thebes, Amon. Date between 1321 and 1205 B.C.

The first to come into being in the earliest times, Amon, who came into being at the beginning, so that his mysterious nature is unknown. No god came into being before him; there was no other god with him, so that he might tell his form. He had no mother, after whom his name might have been made. He had no father who had begotten him and who might have said: 'This is I!' Building his own egg, a daemon mysterious of birth, who created his [own] beauty, the divine god who came into being by himself. All [other] gods came into being after he began himself.

\* Sometimes rendered *seboyet*.

† The translations are by J. A. Wilson (from J. B. Pritchard's collection), except the Aton hymn, which is from Weigall.

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One is Amon, hiding himself from them, concealing himself from the [other] gods, so that his [very] colour is unknown. He is far from heaven, he is *absent from* the Underworld, [so that] no gods know his true form. His image is not *displayed* in writings. No one bears witness to him. . . . He is too mysterious that his majesty might be disclosed, he is too great that [men] should ask about him, too powerful that he might be known. Instantly [one] falls in a death of violence at the utterance of his mysterious name, unwittingly or wittingly. No [other] god knows how to *call him* by it, the Soul who hides his name, according as he is mysterious.

All gods are three: Amon, Re, and Ptah, and there is no second to them. 'Hidden' is his name as Amon, he is Re in face, and his body is Ptah. Their cities are on earth, abiding for ever: Thebes, Heliopolis, and Memphis unto eternity.

A message is sent from heaven, is heard in Heliopolis, and is repeated in Memphis to the Fair of Face. It is composed in a despatch by the writing of Thoth, with regard to the City of Amon *and the [right to] possess* their property. The matter is answered in Thebes, and a statement is issued: 'It belongs to the Ennead.' Everything that issues from his mouth *is [itself]* Amon. The gods are established according to command *because* of him. A message is sent: 'It shall slay or shall let live. Life, and death are with it for everybody.'

Only he [is]: Amon, with Re [and with Ptah] – together three ...

It is hazardous to see in the above passages an adumbration of the Christian Trinity, although the possibility of this cannot be entirely ruled out. It is more likely that it is another example of the tendency, which occurs also in India, to group deities in triads.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### (vii) *Hymn to Aton, possibly part of Akhenaten's liturgy*

#### UNIVERSAL SPLENDOUR AND POWER OF ATON

Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky,  
O living Aton, Beginning of life!  
When thou risest in the eastern horizon,  
Thou fillest every land with thy beauty.  
Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high above every  
land,  
Thy rays, they encompass the lands, even all that thou  
hast made.  
Thou art Re, and thou carriest them all away captive;  
Thou bindest them by thy love.  
Though thou art far away, thy rays are upon earth;  
Though thou art on high, thy footprints are the day.

#### NIGHT

When thou settest in the western horizon of the sky,  
The earth is in darkness like the dead;  
They sleep in their chambers,  
Their heads are wrapped up,  
Their nostrils are stopped,  
And none seeth the other,  
While all their things are stolen  
Which are under their heads,  
And they know it not.  
Every lion cometh forth from his den,  
All serpents, they sting.  
Darkness . . .  
The world is in silence,  
He that made them resteth in his horizon.

#### DAY AND MAN

Bright is the earth when thou risest in the horizon  
When thou shinest as Aton by day

## PART TWO

Thou drivest away the darkness.  
When thou sendest forth thy rays,  
The Two Lands [Egypt] are in daily festivity.  
Awake and standing upon their feet  
When thou hast raised them up.  
Their limbs bathed, they take their clothing,  
Their arms uplifted in adoration to thy dawning.  
[Then] in all the world they do their work.

### DAY AND THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS

All cattle rest upon their pasturage,  
The trees and the plants flourish,  
The birds flutter in their marshes,  
Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.  
All the sheep dance upon their feet,  
All winged things fly,  
They live when thou hast shone upon them.

### DAY AND THE WATERS

The barques sail up-stream and down-stream alike.  
Every highway is open because thou dawnest.  
The fish in the river leap up before thee.  
Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.

### CREATION OF MAN

Creator of the germ in woman,  
Maker of seed in man,  
Giving life to the son in the body of his mother,  
Soothing him that he may not weep,  
Nurse [even] in the womb,  
Giver of breath to animate every one that he maketh!  
When he cometh forth from the body... on the day of  
his birth,  
Thou openest his mouth in speech,  
Thou suppliest his necessities.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### CREATION OF ANIMALS

\* When the fledgling in the egg chirps in the shell,  
Thou givest him breath therein to preserve him alive.  
When thou hast brought him together,  
To [the point of] bursting in the egg,  
He cometh forth from the egg  
To chirp with all his might.  
He goeth about upon his two feet  
When he hath come forth therefrom.

### THE WHOLE CREATION

How manifold are thy works!  
They are hidden from before [us],  
O sole God, whose powers no other possesseth,  
Thou didst create the earth according to thy heart  
While thou wast alone;  
Men, all cattle large and small,  
All that are upon the earth,  
That go about upon their feet;  
[All] that are on high,  
That fly with their wings.  
The foreign countries, Syria and Kush,  
The land of Egypt;  
Thou settest every man into his place  
Thou suppliest their necessities.  
Every one has his possessions,  
And his days are reckoned.  
The tongues are divers in speech,  
Their forms likewise and their skins are distinguished.  
[For] thou makest different the strangers.

### WATERING THE EARTH IN EGYPT AND ABROAD

Thou makest the Nile in the Nether World,  
Thou bringest it as thou desirest,

## PART TWO

To preserve alive the people.  
For thou hast made them for thyself,  
The lord of them all, resting among them;  
Thou lord of every land, who risest for them,  
Thou Sun of day, great in majesty.  
All the distant countries,  
Thou makest [also] their life,  
Thou hast set a Nile in the sky;  
When it falleth for them,  
It maketh waves upon the mountains,  
Like the great green sea,  
Watering their fields in their towns.

How excellent are thy designs, O lord of eternity!  
There is a Nile in the sky for the strangers  
And for the cattle of every country that go upon their  
feet.  
[But] the Nile, it cometh from the Nether World for  
Egypt.

## THE SEASONS

Thy rays nourish every garden;  
When thou risest they live,  
They grow by thee.  
Thou makest the seasons  
In order to create all thy work:  
Winter to bring them coolness,  
And heat that they may taste thee.

Thou didst make the distant sky to rise therein,  
In order to behold all that thou hast made.  
Thou alone, shining in thy form as living Aton,  
Dawning, glittering, going afar and returning.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

Thou makest millions of forms  
Through thyself alone;  
Cities, towns, and tribes, highways and rivers.  
All eyes see thee before them,  
For thou art Aton of the day over the earth. . . .

### REVELATION TO THE KING

Thou art in my heart,  
There is no other that knoweth thee  
Save thy son Ikhnaton.  
Thou hast made him wise  
In thy designs and in thy might.  
The world is in thy hand,  
Even as thou hast made them.  
When thou hast risen they live,  
When thou settest they die;  
For thou art length of life of thyself,  
Men live through thee,  
While [their] eyes are upon thy beauty  
Until thou settest.  
All labour is put away  
When thou settest in the west. . . .

Thou didst establish the world,  
And raise them up for thy son,  
Who came forth from thy limbs,  
The king of Upper and Lower Egypt,  
Living in Truth, Lord of the Two Lands,  
Nefer-khepru-Re, Wan-Re [Ikhnaton],  
Son of Re, living in Truth, lord of diadems,  
Ikhnaton, whose life is long;  
[And for] the chief royal wife, his beloved,  
Mistress of the Two Lands, Nefer-nefru-Aton, Nofretete,  
Living and flourishing for ever and ever.

## PART TWO

### (viii) *Passages from the Sebayit Literature*

#### (a) *The teaching of Kagemni*

End of third dynasty, say 2680 B.C. The manuscript of this is thought to be eleventh to twelfth dynasty, and is known as Papyrus Prisse. The doctrine is mainly prudential worldly wisdom, but the following passage occurs in the fifth paragraph of the fragment:

No man knows what is going to happen, or what *God* will do when He strikes.

#### (b) *The teaching of Ptah-hetep*

Reign of Asosi of the fifth dynasty, c. 2490-2450 (also Papyrus Prisse). Étienne Drioton gives fifteen passages, similar to the two which are given below, in which reference is made to 'God'. The difficulty of interpreting these fairly is due to the ambiguity in the use of the article. At first it was thought that where the article 'the' was used, the word 'God' meant an individual god in the pantheon, and that only when the article was omitted could the meaning be said to be 'monotheistic'. Unfortunately there are a number of cases where the context rules out any other than the monotheistic interpretation, although in these instances the article is used. It would seem therefore that there is no consistency in usage to help the reader, and it is quite likely that the use of the term *pā nēter* in *sebayit* literature sometimes merely means the divine personage of the king, sometimes an individual god, and sometimes God monotheistically conceived, much as we might say 'Providence'. Only the context can give us the probable meaning in each instance, and even then there is no certainty. One curious fact however may be noted. It is said that in Coptic (Christian Egyptian language: Copt=Guptos=Egyptian) Christian writers use a word *pnoutē* to render the word GOD in the Old and New Testaments. It will be seen that this word has the same three consonants as *pā nēter*, and it may well be that in Egyptian tradition there was some word *p-n-t* which from the remotest antiquity was used in popular phraseology for Absolute Deity. But this can be no more than the barest speculation.

(I) If thou art a poor fellow, following a man of distinction, one of good standing with the god, know thou not his



former insignificance. Thou shouldst not be puffed-up against him because of what thou didst know of him formerly. Show regard for him in conformity with what has accrued to him – property does not come of itself. It is their law for him who wishes them. *As for him who oversteps, he is feared.* It is god who makes [a man's] quality, and he defends him [even] while he is asleep. ...

(2) To hear is of advantage for a son who hearkens. If hearing enters into a hearkener, the hearkener becomes a hearer. [When] hearing is good, speaking is good. Every hearkener [is] an advantage, and hearing is of advantage to the hearkener. To hear is better than anything that is, [and thus] comes the goodly love [of a man]. How good it is when a son accepts what his father says! Thereby *maturity* comes to him. He whom god loves is a hearkener, [but] he whom god hates cannot hear. It is the heart which brings up its lord as one who hears or as one who does not hear. The life, prosperity, and health of a man is his heart. ...

(c) *From the teaching for Merikarē from his father King Khati*

Not earlier than 2100, more probably c. 2050 B.C. Here again Drioton gives ten passages in which the word 'God' is used, though some of these do not suggest a very exalted meaning for the term.

Generation passes generation among men, and the god, who knows [men's] characters, has hidden himself. [But] there is none who can withstand the Lord of the Hand: he is the one who attacks what the eyes can see. Revere the god upon his way, made of costly stones and fashioned [of] metal, like a flood replaced by [another] flood. There is no river that permits itself to be concealed; that is, it breaks the [dam] by which it was hidden. [So] also the soul goes to the place which it knows, and deviates not from its way of yesterday. Enrich thy house of the West; embellish thy place of the necropolis,

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as an upright man and as one who executes the justice upon which [men's] hearts rely. More acceptable is the character of one upright of heart than the ox of the evildoer. Act for the god, that he may act similarly for thee, with oblations which make the offering-table flourish and with a carved inscription – that is what bears witness to thy name. The god is aware of him who acts for him.

(d) *Instruction of a father to his son, known as The Wisdom of Anii*

This exists in several papyri, and is thought to date from about 1450 B.C. Here Drioton gives eight passages in which God is mentioned, and six of these he considers to be monotheistic. I have quoted from this work in *Comparative Religion*. One maxim, no. 62, begins 'men are the image of God'.

... Make offering to thy god, and beware of sins against him. Thou shouldst not inquire about his affairs. Be not [too] free with him during his procession. Do not approach him [too close] to carry him. Thou shouldst not disturb the veil; beware of exposing what it shelters. Let thine eye have regard to the nature of his anger, and prostrate thyself in his name. He shows [his] power in a million forms. [Only] they are magnified whom he magnifies. The god of this land is the sun which is in the horizon, and [only] his images are upon earth. If incense be given as their daily food, the Lord of Appearances will be established.

Some of the above seems to imply the worship of an image in its shrine. Others are more lofty, e.g.

Maxim 35: Let him who accuseth thee falsely betray his own falsehood [presumably in cross-examination], after the manner of God who discerneth the just.

Maxim 37: Do not do that for which [thy mother] blameth thee, nor that which causeth her to lift up her hands unto God, for He would hear her prayer.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### (e) *From the teaching of Amen-em-Ope*

This is thought to date from about 850 B.C., and Drioton gives twenty-eight passages which use the word 'God'. Most of these he considers to be monotheistic, though other scholars would not agree with him. It is this work which most nearly resembles the Hebrew book of Proverbs, though the relation of the one to the other is obscure and has been much debated.

Do not laugh at a blind man nor tease a dwarf  
Nor injure the affairs of the lame.  
Do not tease a man who is in the hand of the god,  
Nor be fierce of face against him if he errs.  
For man is clay and straw,  
And the god is his builder.  
He is tearing down and building up every day.  
He makes a thousand poor men as he wishes,  
[Or] he makes a thousand men as *overseers*,  
When he is in his hour of life.  
How joyful is he who reaches the West,  
When he is safe in the hand of the god.

Do not recognize a widow if thou catchest her in the  
fields,  
Nor fail to be indulgent to her reply.  
Do not neglect a stranger [with] thy oil-jar,  
That it be doubled before thy brethren.  
God desires respect for the poor  
More than the honouring of the exalted. ...

These of course are only specimens. Other treatises are the teaching of Ahkto, the son of Duauf, perhaps 1205 B.C. (which seems to have only one reference to 'God', and is mostly advice as to how to get on in life), and the Admonitions of Ipuwer, say 2000 B.C. or a little earlier. There is also at least one of a much later date which is inscribed on a tomb (that of Petosiris) c. 300 B.C.

## PART TWO

### (ix) *Mesopotamian Proverbs and Precepts*

Proverbs and precepts of a similar sort appear to have existed among other peoples in antiquity,\* though we have not so far unearthed as many as in Egypt. In Babylonia a few have been discovered. Some of these are Akkadian, from which the following may be taken as an example:

From before the gate of the city whose armament is not powerful, the enemy cannot be repulsed.

From an Assyrian collection dateable to the reign of Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.) comes this:

Man is but the shadow of a god, a slave is the shadow of a man; but the King is the [very] image of a god.

From a tablet of Babylonian origin dateable some time before 700 B.C. I give the following longer extract:

As a wise man, let your understanding shine modestly,  
Let your mouth be restrained, guarded your speech.  
Like a man's wealth, let your lips be precious.  
Let affront, hostility, be an abomination unto you.  
Speak nothing impertinent, [give no] unreliable advice.  
Whoever does something ugly - his head is despised.  
Hasten not to stand in a public assembly,  
Seek not the place of quarrel;  
For in a quarrel you must give a decision,  
And you will be forced to be their witness.  
They will fetch you to testify in a lawsuit that does not  
concern you.  
When you see a quarrel, go away without noticing it.  
But if it is really your own quarrel, extinguish the flame;  
For a quarrel is a neglect of what is right,

\* E.g. the Kurral, in South India, of which I am sorry I have no space to give extracts.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

A protecting wall... [for] the nakedness of one's adversary:

Whoever stops it is thinking about the interests of a friend.

Unto your opponent do no evil;

Your evildoer recompense with good;

Unto your enemy let justice [be done].

Unto your oppressor...

Let him rejoice over you, ... return to him.

Let not your heart be induced to do evil. ...

*[some lines lost]*

Give food to eat, give date wine to drink;

The one begging for alms honour, clothe:

Over this his god rejoices,

This is pleasing unto the God Shamash, he rewards it with good.

Be helpful, do good.

A maid in the house do not...

Do not marry a harlot whose husbands are six thousand.\*

The passage about returning good for evil will catch the eye of many, who will see in it a parallel to sayings in the Gospels and in the Epistle to the Romans. It seems not unlikely that if we were able to recover and reconstruct the moral precepts of the Middle and Near East in antiquity with greater fullness, we might find that there was a whole series of what Dr Kirk of Oxford has called 'household codes' which were handed down orally as well as in tablet or papyrus form, and which contained traditional maxims, some of them of a much more advanced character than we might expect. If the Logos was working in men's minds from the first, it need not disturb Christians

\* Translation by R. H. Pfeiffer (in J. B. Pritchard's collection). Just before going to press comes the news that Dr S. N. Kramer, an American archaeologist, has found and begun to translate a Sumerian eight-column tablet which is preserved in the Istanbul Museum in Turkey, and which is said to represent a Mesopotamian list of maxims at least a thousand years older than the Biblical Book of Proverbs. I have only seen brief extracts at present, and from these the background would seem to be polytheistic, and not very religious at that.

## PART TWO

to find isolated instances of what has been called 'Christianity before Christ'.

### 98

## CENTRAL AMERICA

Presumably the only sacred literature of this area was of the pictographic type, such as may be seen in the illustrations to Vaillant's *Aztecs of Mexico*. The wonderful history compiled by Fray Bernardino de Sahagun contains no doubt abstracts of the information which he derived from studying it, and from talking to the people themselves, but it can hardly be called a translation of these codices. Sahagun however did also collect from oral transmission many of the hymns used by the Mexicans in their worship. It does not appear that the whole of these have been translated into English. I am not sure indeed that the manuscript itself has ever been printed *in extenso*.\* Lewis Spence, who has evidently read the originals, quotes portions of two hymns, both to goddesses:

(a) To Ciuacoatl, who seems to have been a composite deity, partly an antelope, partly a maize divinity, partly a goddess of war, partly a rain deity. It is all very complicated, but the total impression is of a ruthless nature-goddess, who, like Kali in India, has to be propitiated with blood-sacrifice.

Morning has dawned.  
The order to the warriors has gone forth.  
Drag the captives hence.  
The whole land shall be destroyed.†  
The deer from Colhuacan,††  
She is covered with feathers.  
Those who fight bravely in war  
Are painted with eagle-feathers.

\* Though it is included in the *Bibliografia di Sahagun*, which is given at the end of the American translation of Sahagun's *Historia*.

† The prisoners of war are to be sacrificed, as without their blood the maize will not grow and the whole land will be desolate.

†† The goddess is arrayed like a successful warrior. Sahagun says that the Mexicans believed that she gave them victory over their enemies.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

(b) To Itzpapalotl, who seems to have been first a goddess of hunters, and subsequently a goddess of cultivators. She appears pictorially as a figure with butterfly wings edged with stone knives, the claws of a jaguar, and the face of a woman. This sort of symbolism is typical of the polytheistic stage, though it persists in the Bible literature beyond it. We think naturally of the composite images of India (Ganesa for example), of the symbolism of Ezekiel's vision, and finally of the imagery in the Book of Revelation.

O she has become a goddess of the melon cactus,  
Our Mother Itzpapalotl, the Obsidian Butterfly;  
Her food is on the Nine Plains,  
She was nurtured on the hearts of deer,  
Our Mother, the Earth-goddess.

## 99

### PERUVIAN HYMN TO A HIGH GOD

This was used in the worship of a high god in the days of Pizarro and the conquest of the empire of the Incas. It is taken from the Quechua text edited by Dr Miguel Mossi,\* and Dr Gowen, the American expert in the history of religions, thinks that it may represent the attempt of the King, Pachacutec (A.D. 1400-1448), to convert Viracocha from a mere Sun-god into a Supreme Being. If so, Pachacutec is to be compared with the reforming Pharaoh, Amenhotep IV of Egypt, and with Nezahualcoyotl, king of Tezcuco in Mexico, A.D. 1418-72.

Viracocha, Lord of the Universe.  
Whether male or female,  
at any rate commander of heat and reproduction,  
being one who,  
even with his spittle, can work sorcery,  
where art Thou?—

\* Translation by P. A. Means.

## PART TWO

Would that Thou wert not hidden from this son of  
Thine.

He may be above;

He may be below;

or perchance abroad in space.

Where is His mighty judgement-seat?—

Hear me.

He may be spread abroad among the upper waters;

or among the lower waters and their sands,

He may be dwelling, Creator of the world,

Creator of man,

Great among my ancestors

before Thee

my eyes fail me,

Though I long to see Thee,

for, seeing Thee,

knowing Thee,

learning from Thee,

understanding Thee,

I shall be seen by Thee

and Thou wilt know me.

The sun — the moon;

The day — the night;

not in vain

in orderly succession

do they march

to their destined place,

to their goal.

They arrive

wherever

Thy royal staff

Thou bearest.

O hearken to me,

listen to me,



## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

let it not befall  
that I grow weary  
and die.

### NOTE ON THE POPOL VUH

The *Popol Vuh* is described as the ancient sacred book of the Quiché Maya of Central America. After the conquest by Cortez it was believed to have been found in some sort of script, and transcribed by a Spaniard. The only existing MS. of it however is in Latin characters, and if ever there was an original it must have been of a pictographic nature, resembling the codices of the Mexicans. It seems more than likely that there never was an original *Popol Vuh* in script, and that the transmission of the chronicle which Morley has lately issued in an English translation was for many centuries, and possibly up to the time of the Spanish conquest, purely of an oral nature. Morley's edition\* is interesting not only as showing a new example of a 'sacred history book', but because it is not unlikely that a good deal more literature of this character existed in pre-conquest America, and that it has failed to survive partly because it was never committed to script, partly because even if it was, the documents were destroyed. Space forbids any extracts from the *Popol Vuh*, and it must suffice to say that it is a mixture of polytheistic myths and tribal records, and as such must rank with a production like the *Kojiki* of Japan (see Part Four).

### ¶ 10

### THE HOMERIC HYMNS

These are not really liturgical productions at all, nor can they be attributed to Homer. They are artificial compositions, intended for recitation at festivals of the gods, by rhapsodists who spoke them as preludes to the declaiming of appropriate passages from the poet. Parts of them possibly date back to the seventh or eighth century B. C., but otherwise they belong to the fifth century. Some of them are of

\* Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Popol Vuh*, 1950.

considerable length, and can hardly have been simply *pröoimia* or preludes. Others consist only of a few lines. The main point about them is that they are artificial. People could win prizes for making them up. Hesiod says that he won a pot for a new hymn at a gathering at Chalcis. Nevertheless we can get from them some idea of what the Greeks thought was the appropriate way in which to address their gods, though it looks rather as though spontaneous religious devotion was already on the wane. It is possible to be a successful poet without possessing any genuine piety. We can recall that Rupert Brooke wrote quite a good poem on the Annunciation, although from the rest of his works one derives the impression that he was an agnostic, or even an atheist.

The following extract from the hymn to the Delian Apollo will give some idea of the general style of these so-called Homeric hymns:

I will remember and not be unmindful of Apollo, the One who strikes from afar, before whom the gods tremble in the house of Zeus, when He draws near. And they all spring from their seats at his approach, if he chance to rattle his shining bow. Leto alone remains by the side of Zeus, who rejoices in his thunderbolt. She unstrings his bow and closes the quiver. She takes with her own hands the bow from off his shoulders, and hangs it upon a column of his Father's house, upon a golden nail. Then she leads him to a throne and bids him sit. In a golden beaker his Father extends to him the divine nectar, and drinks to his son's health. Then the rest of the gods seat themselves once again; and the majestic Leto rejoices that she gave birth to the strong son who carries the bow.

How shall I praise Thee, who art above all worthy of praise? Shall I sing how Leto bare Thee in the beginning, as a refreshment to mortal man, reclining upon Mount Kynthos on the rocky islet of Delos, round which the sea floweth?

The story of Apollo's birth and youth follows. The picture is clear enough. Zeus in the hymn is the Nordic chief surrounded by his warriors and attended by his wife. His favourite son enters, a rather dangerous fellow but a fine hunter, and the warriors rise out of respect.

The mother escorts the son to his seat, while Zeus no doubt cries 'Skall', and drinks to his noble offspring. This is the purest example of what Xenophanes calls 'men making gods in the likeness of themselves'. How far the poets in question believed in it seriously we cannot tell, but the atmosphere is quite familiar; it is that of polytheistic India, where this kind of thing has survived almost up to our own day, in spite of the philosophers.

§ II

HYMNS FROM THE RIG-VEDA

The sacred literature of India, as we might expect, is diverse and manifold. We are not concerning ourselves at the moment with that of Pakistan or Moslem India, which is of course centred upon the Qur'ān, nor are we referring to the hybrid literature of such communities as the Sikhs, where the influence of Hinduism and Islam alike is to be seen. We are concerned solely with the sacred books of Hinduism. These fall into two categories, according to which the Brahmins have seen fit to divide them, namely *śruti*, that which has been heard, and *smṛiti*, that which has been remembered, i.e. tradition,

Into the first category fall what are known as 'The Vedas'. The word *veda* comes from the same root as the Greek word *oîda*, and means 'knowledge' or perhaps, more strictly, 'sacred knowledge arrived at by being in a special state of consciousness'. The expression 'The Vedas' is used commonly in two senses. Sometimes it indicates the whole of the Vedic literature, both text and interpretation; but it also means, in the more accurate use, the four books called respectively: the *Rig-Veda* or *Raja-Veda* (literally Royal Veda), or as it was first called, *rchah*, i.e. praises; the *Sama-Veda*, originally called *samani* or melodies, i.e. hymns arranged for the chanting priest; the *Yajur-Veda*, originally called the *yajumsi* or liturgy, i.e. formulas for the recitation of the priest in performing benedictions; and finally the *Atharva-Veda*, originally called the *atharvasangirah*, or blessings and curses, i.e. *mantras* or spells, especially for averting misfortune. The *Rig-Veda* contains 1,028 hymns, and is about the size of the entire

## PART TWO

Homeric books. It shows much development, and is divided into ten books, six of which are grouped each round some alleged circle or family of *rishis* or seers, the tenth book being much more speculative than the others. These hymns are composed in archaic Sanskrit, which stands to ordinary Sanskrit much as Homeric Greek stands to classical Greek. The originals took shape somewhere between 1000 and 800 B.C., and are therefore not, as is often stated, the oldest religious literature in the world. It was centuries before they were committed to writing, because they were regarded as too sacred to be written down, and also too potent for any unauthorized person to be allowed to get hold of them, so they were kept secret by the priests. Even when committed to script, they were jealously guarded, and lower castes were not allowed to read them.

It is evident that some of these hymns were in the beginning almost on the level of secular compositions, and none of them were originally thought of as 'revelation' in the sense in which we use the word. About 700 B.C. however the idea developed that they were in some sense *direct revelation*, i.e. that they were received by intuition on the part of the *rishis* or seers, as a sort of series of cosmic vibrations (not given by any Personal Revealer) which were subsequently turned into verbal form by the recipients.

This meant that to the four Vedas there soon became attached 'Brahmanas', which were prose commentaries or exegeses of the Vedas themselves, though mostly expositions of the sacred ritual. The Brahmanas gradually merge into the 'Upanishads' or philosophical treatises, of which we shall speak later in the next section. After that we get an end of *śruti* proper (although, as we shall see, some books stand on the border-line) and we come to the *smṛiti* or tradition, a large part of which consists of what are called sectarian books, but which also contains some treatises on morality, known as the 'Sutras', divided into Ritual or House-books, and Law-books.

At this point then we are only concerned with the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*. It is natural to begin with two hymns addressed to the high god Varuna, who, although a member of the Vedic Olympus, attains almost to the level of the Hebrew Yahweh in moral grandeur. Both these hymns come from the seventh book.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### I

Wise are the generations through the greatness  
Of him who propped the two wide worlds asunder;  
Pushed forth the great and lofty vault of heaven,  
The day-star, too; and spread the earth out broadly.

With mine own self I meditate this question:  
'When shall I have with Varuna communion?  
What gift of mine will he enjoy unangered?  
When shall I happy-hearted see his mercy?'

Wishing to know my sin I make inquiry,  
I go about to all the wise and ask them;  
One and the selfsame thing even sages tell me:  
'Varuna hath with thee hot indignation.'

O Varuna, what was my chief transgression,  
That thou wouldst slay a friend who sings thy praises?  
Tell me, god undeceived and sovereign, guiltless  
Would I appease thee then with adoration?

Set us free from the misdeeds of our fathers,  
From those that we ourselves have perpetrated;  
Like cattle-thief, O king, like calf rope-fastened,  
So set thou free Vasistha from the fetter.

'Twas not mine own will, Varuna, 'twas delusion,  
Drink, anger, dice, or lack of thought, that caused it;  
An older man has led astray a younger,  
Not even sleep protects a man from evil.

O let me like a slave, when once made sinless,  
Serve him the merciful, erewhile the angry.  
The noble god has made the thoughtless thoughtful;  
He speeds the wise to riches, he a wiser.

## PART TWO

May this my praise-song, Varuna, sovereign ruler,  
Reach unto thee and make thy heart complaisant;  
May it be well with us in rest and labour.  
Do ye protect us evermore with blessings.

### II

I do not wish, King Varuna,  
To go down to the home of clay;  
Be gracious, mighty lord, and spare.

Since like one tottering I move,  
O slinger, like inflated skin,  
Be gracious, mighty lord, and spare.

Somehow through weakness of my will  
I went astray, O shining one;  
Be gracious, mighty lord, and spare.

Thirst found thy singer even when  
He in the midst of waters stood;  
Be gracious, mighty lord, and spare.

Whatever wrong we men commit against the race  
Of heavenly ones, O Varuna, whatever law  
Of thine we here have broken through our thoughtlessness,  
For that transgression do not punish us, O god.

Very different is the hymn to Agni, the god of fire. This extract of three stanzas comes from the first book. In it, as has been said, Agni is little more than 'an assortment of fire qualities', linked together by a slight element of personification. The hymn in effect is extremely primitive, not to say prehistoric. The very word Agni is the same as the Old Latin *ignis* and the Lithuanian *ugni*, and belongs to the age when the Indo-European or proto-Nordic clans were not yet divided, but lived in their primeval home, perhaps somewhere to

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

the south-east of Russia, and were nomads who valued the camp-fire, or at any rate villagers to whom the hearth-fire meant much during the long and severe winters.

Seizing his own food for himself, th'unageing one,  
Agni stands greedy mid the brushwood, full of thirst;  
When ghee-besprinkled shines his back like racer swift,  
Like heaven's exalted ridge he thundering doth roar. ...

Wind-driven, with the sickle, Agni ladle-fed  
Spreads lightly through the brushwood with his mighty  
    roar;

When, bull-like, thirstily thou rushest on the sticks,  
Black is thy course, unageing god with fiery waves.

Fire-jawed, wind-driven, there blazes down upon the  
    wood

Agni, like a strong bull that rushes on the herd,  
Mounting the everlasting air with streaming light, -  
Then both things fixed and moving fear the winged one.

The hymns of the ninth book are entirely devoted to the cultus of the sacred alcohol, Soma. The potency of alcohol was discovered by man at an early date, and was not unnaturally attributed to supernatural agency, and this was gradually personified, so that among the Greeks we get Dionysus, not perhaps at first as the god of wine, but as the god of the barley spirit.

### TO SOMA PAVAMĀNA

By most exhilarating stream  
And sweetest, Soma, filter thee,  
Pressed out for Indra as his drink.

Fiend-slayer, present everywhere,  
He through the wooden trough has reached  
His seat, his metal-wrought abode.

## PART TWO

Be thou best Vritra-slayer, best  
Granter of bliss, most liberal;  
Our noble patrons' wealth increase.

Flow onward with thy juice unto  
The banquet of the mighty gods;  
Flow unto victory and fame.

O Indu, we draw nigh to thee,  
This is our object, day by day;  
To thee our wishes are addressed.

By means of the unfailing fleece  
The daughter of the sun doth cleanse  
Thy Soma that is streaming forth.

Him seize and hold fast in the fight  
Ten slender maidens, sisters all,  
In the decisive day of war.

Him send they forth, the virgin band,  
They blow the bagpipe musical;  
Threefold protection is the juice.

Milch-kine inviolable anoint  
The infant Soma with their milk, -  
Soma for Indra as his drink.

In the wild raptures of this draught,  
Indra slays all his enemies;  
The mighty one bestoweth wealth.

Night and Morning are the daughters of Heaven, and are personified as minor female divinities. Here is a hymn to Night, who is conceived not as blind darkness, but as a being with many eyes, i.e. the stars.

Night drawing near has looked abroad,  
In many places with her eyes;  
All glories has she now assumed.



## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

Pervaded has the immortal one  
The depths, the heights, the ample space  
With light she drives away the gloom.

The goddess Night, approaching nigh,  
Her sister Dawn has ousted quite;  
The darkness too will disappear.

To us this day thou hast appeared,  
At whose approach we seek our homes  
As birds their nests upon the tree.

Home too have gone the villagers,  
Home those possessing feet and wings,  
Home even the greedy hawks have gone.

Ward off the she-wolf and the wolf,  
Ward off the thief, O brooding Night.  
And so be easy to traverse.

The darkness has drawn nigh to me,  
Black, obvious, painting mystic scenes,  
O Dawn, disperse it like a debt,

My hymn like kine I've brought to thee.  
Take it, Night, daughter of the sky,  
Like song of praise to conqueror.

In the Hindu pantheon the Sun occurs under many names: Surya, Savitar, Vishnu, Pusan, and perhaps Mitra. It may be that at first these were the names given to the divine Sun by different Nordic tribes, but latterly they seem to have been taken to indicate the Sun in different positions and under different aspects. Thus under different titles many hymns are addressed to the sun.

The 'golden text' of the whole *Rig-Veda* is the famous *Sāvitrī* or *Gāyatrī*, the most sacred of all Vedic stanzas:

That longed-for glow of Savitar,  
The heavenly one, may we obtain;  
So may he stimulate our thoughts.

Or as Macdonell translates:\*

May we attain that excellent  
Glory of Savitar the god,  
That he may stimulate our thoughts.

Here Savitar's power of stimulation is transferred to the spiritual world, and he becomes the inspirer and quickener of thought. As Savitar awakens the world to do its work, so he awakens the spirit of man. The morning glow is an emblem of the inward illumination which the earnest worshipper or student desires for himself at the beginning of the day, or, in the post-Vedic period, at the beginning of Vedic study. As Soma exhilarates to holy thought and prayer, so Savitar stimulates.

Finally, Savitar, through his quickening and inner illumination, makes men sinless:

If we have done aught 'gainst the gods through thought-  
lessness,  
Weakness of will, or insolence, men as we are,  
Whether we've sinned against the gods or mortal men,  
Make thou us free from sin and guilt, O Savitar.

And so he is able to declare them sinless to the sun and Aditi.

Savitar with his morning glow drives away the sorrows of  
the night and all bad dreams.

Rudra is clearly a dangerous deity, perhaps at first a storm-god, but later the god personifying ruthless and destructive natural forces. His symbol was apparently a bull, and because of his dangerous character the epithet Siva or auspicious one was applied to him, just as the Greek Furies or Erinyes came to be called Eumenides or kindly ones, no doubt in flattery intended to propitiate. In later Hinduism, the name Siva becomes dominant, and that of Rudra disappears.

\* Another rendering of the *Gāyatrī*, which gives it almost a Christian sense, and which is in any case much more removed from the actual cultus of a Sun-god, runs:

Let us meditate upon the most Excellent Light:  
May He guide our intellects.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### TO RUDRA

Let thy goodwill, sire of the Maruts, reach us;  
From the sun's sight remove us not, O Rudra.  
In mercy may the hero spare our horses;  
May we with offspring, Rudra, be prolific.

Through those most wholesome remedies by thee  
given,

Rudra, I would attain a hundred winters.  
Drive far away from us distress and hatred,  
Diseases drive away in all directions.

Of what is born thou art the best in glory,  
Bolt-wielding Rudra, mightiest of the mighty.  
Across distresses ferry us in safety,  
Repel thou from us all attacks of mischief.

May we not anger thee, O mighty Rudra,  
With worship poor, ill-praise, joint-invocation.  
By remedies do thou raise up our heroes,  
I hear thou art the best of all physicians.

Rudra invoked with gifts and invocations  
I would propitiate with hymns and praises.  
Gracious, fair-lipped, accessible, and ruddy,  
May he subject us not to his fierce anger.

Me begging succour has the bull made happy,  
By his puissant strength, he girt with Maruts.  
Shade in the heat, as 'twere, I would attain to,  
Would fain, uninjured, win the grace of Rudra.

Where is that gracious hand of thine, O Rudra,  
Which is for us medicinal and cooling?  
Bearer away of harm by gods inflicted,  
Be thou, O Bull, compassionate to me-ward.

## PART TWO

I for the bull, the ruddy-brown and whitish,  
Mightily voice a mighty panegyric.  
Adore the radiant one with lowly worship,  
We praise the name, the terrible name of Rudra.  
With firm limbs, multiform, the strong, the ruddy,  
Has decked himself with jewels bright and golden.  
From Rudra, this great universe's ruler,  
Let not divine dominion ever vanish.  
Worthy art thou that bearest bow and arrows,  
And thine adorable all-coloured necklace.  
Worthy art thou that wieldest all this terror;  
There's nothing mightier than thou, O Rudra.  
Praise him the famous, youthful, and car-seated,  
Like dread beast pouncing on his prey, the mighty,  
Be kind, when lauded, to the singer, Rudra;  
Than us some other may thy missiles lay low.  
Even as a son bows down in reverence lowly  
What time his sire draws nigh with kindly greeting,  
So praise I the true lord, who giveth richly;  
To us thou grantest remedies when lauded.  
Your remedies, O Maruts, that are cleansing,  
That are most wholesome, mighty ones, and helpful,  
Those that our father Manu hath selected,  
Those I desire, yea Rudra's balm and healing.  
May Rudra's missile turn aside and pass us,  
May the vast ill-will of the fierce one spare us;  
Relax thy bow-string for our liberal patrons,  
O bounteous one, be kind to our descendants.  
So, bull, that here art ruddy-brown and far-famed,  
Since thou, O god, art neither wroth nor slayest,  
To this our invocation be attentive.  
We would with strong sons speak aloud at worship.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

The last Vedic hymn we shall give here is the famous so-called Hymn of Creation, from the tenth book. It will be seen that it is sophisticated and philosophical, and belongs to a stage of transition in religious thought far removed from that of the early hymns. Indeed it questions the status of the Vedic gods, and asks 'Who is the real Creator?', finally concluding that the gods themselves are not ultimate, but perhaps themselves the products of some mysterious Self-Existent Cosmic Being.

Then was not non-existent nor existent:  
There was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.  
What covered in, and where? – and what gave shelter? –  
Was water there, unfathomed depth of water? –

Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal:  
No sign was there, the day's and night's divider.  
That one thing breathless, breathed by its own nature:  
Apart from it was nothing whatsoever.

Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness,  
This All was indiscriminated chaos.  
All that existed then was void and formless:  
By the great power of warmth was born that unit.

Thereafter rose desire in the beginning,  
Desire, the primal seed and germ of spirit.  
Sages who searched with their hearts' thought discovered  
The existent's kinship in the non-existent.

Transversely was their severing line extended:  
What was above it then, and what below it? –  
There were begetters, there were mighty forces,  
Free action here and energy up yonder.

Who verily knows and who can here declare it,  
Whence it was born and whence comes this creation? –  
The gods are later than this world's production.  
Who knows, then, whence it first came into being? –

He, the first origin of this creation,  
 Whether he formed it all or did not form it,  
 Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven,  
 He verily knows, it, or perhaps he knows it not.

## § 12

## CHINA

The classical literature of China admits of many subdivisions, as may be seen from Dr E. R. Hughes' source-book.\* The latter, however, deals mainly with the springs and development of Chinese philosophy, which falls to be considered in our Part Three.

The usual division of these classics is into the five *King* and the four *Shu*. The five *King* consist of:

(i) The *Yih-King* or *Book of Changes*, a curious and early effort at cosmology, extremely archaic and obscure.

(ii) The *Shu-King* or *Book of History*, which may embody passages dating from as far back as 2400 B.C. It is a collection of ancient documentary records, the editing of which is traditionally attributed to Confucius. The tradition may or may not be correct, but some of the passages clearly indicate a belief in the moral government of the world by a beneficent deity. One of these is quoted below, in Part Three.

(iii) The *Shi-King* or *Book of Odes*. Many of these are of a social rather than a religious character, but it is clear that the Chinese in the distant past composed hymns to their gods just as the Sumerians did, and some of these seem to have been used in connexion with the great sacrifice at the Altar of Heaven at Peking right up to the year 1911. I give therefore below a brief account of this sacrifice, together with the text of the hymns used at it.

(iv) The *Li-Ki*, or *Book of Rites*, which is a sort of Chinese Leviticus, and is concerned not only with religious ritual, but

\* *Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times* (Everyman's Library).

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

also with the regulations for domestic life and the practice of filial piety.

(v) The *Chun Tsiu* or *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which is of a rather different character, being the annals of the state of Lu, Confucius' own state, compiled however with a view to demonstrating the importance of the virtuous life among rulers, and the moral government of the world by Heaven.

The four *Shu* consist of:

(i) The *Lun-Yü* or *obiter dicta* of Confucius and some of his most eminent disciples. We know them usually as the *Analects*, and they were probably collected some time after his death, and may not all be authentic.

(ii) The *Ta Hsueh*, or *Great Learning*.

(iii) The *Chung-Yung* or *Doctrine of the Mean*.

(Both these are compiled from the *Li-Ki* with comments, and are of the nature of educational text-books, based on a deep regard for the teaching and personality of Confucius.)

(iv) The *Doctrine of Meng-tzu* (or Mencius).

Of the above, the first five really belong to our Part II only in their original state. As edited, together with the four *Shu*, they breathe the spirit of the Axial Era, and will be quoted later, in Part Three.

## CHINESE SACRIFICIAL HYMNS

As a prelude to these let me try to piece together a description of what perhaps was the noblest piece of non-Christian worship ever celebrated in the world, the Great Kiao, or winter sacrifice, performed regularly at the Altar of Heaven at Peking by the Emperor of China, and persisting right up to the year 1910, just before the outbreak of the republican revolution.

The altar is said to be the largest ever made by man. It consists of three concentric circular terraces, of which the highest is 90 feet in diameter, the second 150 feet, and the third and lowest 210 feet. The original altar in prehistoric times was probably an earthen mound, and worship may have taken place here as far back as 2500 B.C. An altar in marble was built here about A.D. 1420 and the reconditioning

## PART TWO

of the structure which the tourist to-day would see is said to be mid-nineteenth-century. As it stands it is of extreme beauty. The marble is dazzling white, and each terrace is surrounded by a carved balustrade. In the sides of the terraces are no less than 360 panels. At each of the four points of the compass is a staircase of twenty-seven steps, nine to each terrace. Round the whole altar is a circular court of 335 feet in diameter, surrounded by a low wall panelled with blue tiles. At each of the four cardinal points is an opening with three doors. The whole is surrounded by a square court, each side of which measures 549 feet, with an enclosing wall of dull Pompeian red.

The furniture of this great sanctuary was considerable, including as it did a number of lanterns on standards, a large furnace of green tiles for the burning of the sacrificial animal, various three-legged tables for offerings and wine flagons, a sacristy for the storage of the instruments of sacrifice, a vestry for the Emperor to robe in, various rostrums for leading officials and ministers of rites, stalls for the singers, and places for the imperial guard. The whole ceremony was planned as precisely as any modern coronation, and the lay-out bore some resemblance to a pontifical High Mass, though there is no reason for assuming any Jesuit influence. The altar-platform must have been very carefully constructed with a view to acoustics, since it is said that the human voice is audible over the whole temple area. The spot is so impressive, even in its dereliction, that it is said an American missionary, visiting it a few years ago, instinctively removed his shoes from off his feet.

The announcement of the approaching sacrifice was made by imperial proclamation, and its details were prepared under the direction of a Board of Rites, while the actual date was fixed by the Imperial Board of Astronomy. A period of abstinence for all court officials was fixed for some days in advance, and five days before the actual ceremony a prince of the blood-royal had to inspect the sacrificial victims to see that they were perfect. The prayer for recitation by the Emperor was composed beforehand and inscribed upon a special tablet.

The day before the sacrifice there was a magnificent procession to the temple area, embodying, as Hodous says, an epitome of the mythology and religious history of the Chinese people. The Emperor



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as celebrant was the central figure, but he was attended by guards, musicians, dancers, marshals, banners, umbrellas, feathers, and plumes. It must have been a spectacle of great colour and beauty. During the night the Emperor kept vigil and fasted, while the President of the Bureau of Sacrifice and his assistants arranged all the paraphernalia. A golden lamp and candles were lit, wood was piled up for the burnt offering, and the bodies of the sacrificial animals (which had been killed about twenty-four hours before, and the blood buried) were placed upon convenient tables. An hour and three-quarters before sunrise the Emperor and his attendants took their places, together with a choir of 300 singers, 180 performers of a sacred dance, the incense-bearers, the bearers of silk, wine, and cushions, the censors or masters of the ceremonies whose duty it was to see that no mistake was made in the ritual, and the members of the Royal Family.

The proceedings began by the Emperor performing a lavabo, while an introit hymn was sung. The pyre was then lit and the sacrificial ox consumed. The Emperor was led to the top terrace and offered incense. Then came the offering of jade, silk, and the flesh of the victim, together with broth made from it. A threefold libation was poured, and then a wine-cup was offered by the Emperor. Finally he was led to the table on which lay the prayer-tablet, and the prayer for a blessing on the country during the year was recited. A second offering of wine was next made, and the flute-players with plumes executed a sacred dance. After this the Emperor was conducted to a table in front of the tablet symbolizing the Supreme Deity, Shang-ti, and consumed certain consecrated food and drink. All that was now left over of the offerings was solemnly burned in the furnace, and the herald, who had announced each stage of the ceremony in turn, finally declared the proceedings to be at an end with what corresponded to an 'Ite missa est'.

During this long and dignified service as many as ten hymns were chanted, and of these I give four below. The whole collection is thought to date in its present form from about the middle of the eighteenth century A.D., but the material contained in the hymns is considered by Professor Chen Tu-Ku to be most ancient, and like that in the Book of Odes has been preserved with typical religious conservatism, untouched from the early days of Chinese civilization.

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The hymns given here are in order: (i) the introit; (ii) the hymns before and after the dance; (iii) the hymn during the burning of the offerings at the conclusion of the service. As it is sometimes said that the service at the Altar of Heaven was monotheistic, it is important to notice that although Shang-ti is the centre of worship – the Supreme Sky-god, having attributes rather similar to those of the Hebrew Yahweh – nevertheless many other Shen, or minor divinities, are associated with him in the invitation to be present. (Although the sacrifice was suspended after 1911, it was artificially revived by Yuan Shih-kai in 1915, and this time it was photographed in part, showing the table with the bullock on it ready to be roasted whole. I am sure no such impiety would have been permitted in imperial days.)

During the ceremonial purification the following hymn was sung as a sort of introit:\*

Respectfully we receive the blessings of Heaven.

Oh how they shine with magnificence.

Now the country has been at peace for a long time,

The people within the four seas are united.

We offer a grand and sincere sacrifice:

In obedience to the laws of the twelve tables we harmonize  
the winds.

The unsearchable law of Heaven will grant a glorious  
blessing,

And Heaven will regard my mean self with affection.

Profoundly I consider the exalted generosity,

And hope to be assisted in bringing to completion the works  
of Heaven.

\* It is interesting to note that the hymn is partly spoken in the first person singular, and is presumably composed for the Emperor, who is thus represented as reciting it himself, even though he may do so by proxy through the choir. One may compare this with the explanation of the Hebrew Psalms given by Dr Engnell of Uppsala in his work *Studies in the Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*. Dr Engnell declares that the phrase: 'Psalm of David' means not 'composed by David' but 'for the use of David', i.e. for the use of the king in his capacity as priest-king, so that the employment of the first person is representative rather than personal or individual.

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We have arranged in order the sacrifices.  
Day and night we make our wishes known to Heaven.  
Our chariots like clouds wait a long time.  
Horses and chariots fill the open space in great numbers.  
Blue banners in great array flap in the wind.  
They stand arrayed in numberless rows.  
Reverently we begin to harmonize our feelings of joy  
And look respectfully towards the azure vault.  
Ye hundred spirits, condescend to grant your protection  
To the rulers who purify themselves.  
Ye Shen, come down to the banquet and enjoy yourselves.  
Shang-ti is perspicacious.  
Together they shine forth with mercy and favour  
And regard from afar my virtue.

After the recital of the prayer specially composed for the occasion, the tablet containing it was placed in a basket before the tablet of Shang-ti. The reader then bowed and retired.

The Emperor then went to the second terrace and made offerings to the tablets of the lesser gods.

The herald then announced the second offering of wine, and the Emperor was led again to the top terrace. During his procession a hymn was sung, and flute-players with plumes executed a sacred dance. Professor Giles says that the dance, like the music, was introduced from Greco-Bactrian models. The hymn before the dance was as follows:

Strike the bells, start the evolutions,  
Bring forward again the gemmed wine-cup.  
With profound respect we show our service.  
In order we respectfully bring our offering  
With the face pure and the countenance at ease,  
To the azure table of Heaven resplendent and glorious.  
Silently and joyfully Heaven partakes of the perfume of the offering,  
While the harmonious vapours well up like the ocean.

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All the people await the blessing.  
With respect they gaze up to the pearly vault of Heaven.  
The glorious fountain and the blessed dew  
Will bring reward without merit.

After the dance, and before the offering of the third wine-cup, the following was chanted: .

Oh the final offering!  
Pure is the jade cup.  
Respectfully we offer the millet wine.  
We bring the seasoned broth.  
The jade stones and the flute sound *tsiang tsiang*.  
The sacrifice is absolutely perfect.  
The good wine overflows.  
Do not cease until your purpose is complete.  
The clear will of Heaven should be looked up to and  
examined.  
Then Heaven will bless the multitude of living beings.  
The eight dragons move forward.  
All the instruments of music play in harmony.

After this wine-offering came the reception of what is called 'the viand of blessing' by the Emperor. This consecrated food was placed upon a table in front of the tablet of Shang-ti, and the Emperor was solemnly conducted to it, and receiving the elements from two sacred ministers, consumed them with the customary bowings.

During the burning itself the following was sung:

For Heaven's great blessing I bring solemn offerings.  
The flames of the sacrifice ascend and make announcement  
to Heaven.  
Only the Holy One is able to receive the sacrifice.  
The God of Heaven sits in a car drawn by six dragons.  
They mount on the purple vapours.  
May I long to keep the decree of Heaven and extend the  
rule of the Empire.

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The difficulty of translating these Chinese works into modern English is well illustrated by a comparison of two renderings of another short sacrificial ode composed for the use of the young king of Chou, and therefore very ancient:

1. *Wilhelm's version in German, translated by an American scholar*

Honour Him, Honour Him  
The revealed God.  
His will is hard.  
Say not: He is so high and far.  
He rises up and floats down  
And daily sees our deeds.  
I am still young,  
An inexperienced fool,  
But day by day  
I strive aloft towards wisdom's light.  
Help me to bear the burden,  
Show me life's revelation.

2. *Legge's version, in 'The Sacred Books of the East'*

Let me be reverent, let me be reverent [in attending to my duties].

[The way of] Heaven is evident

And its appointment is not easily preserved.

Let me not say that it is high aloft above me.

It ascends and descends about our doings;

It daily inspects us wherever we are.

I am but as a little child

Without intelligence to be reverently [attentive to my duties].

I will learn to hold fast the gleams of knowledge,

Till I arrive at bright intelligence.

Assist me to bear the burden of my position,

And show me how to display a virtuous conduct.

This kind of variation will be seen again when we come to the actual sayings of Confucius, where the renderings differ greatly.

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WE now approach one of the most exciting periods in history, and certainly the most exciting moment in the history of religion, the period between 800 B.C. and A.D. 300, when man for the first time simultaneously and independently, in China, India, and the West, learned, as Professor Ian Henderson says, 'to stand outside the pattern of his own life, and to question whether it was the best pattern for him.' Of course this change did not come everywhere quite at the same time. Owing to the time-lag, some parts of the world have felt it only in recent generations, while in any case the old ways have persisted alongside the new, especially in India. Yet it is safe to say that mankind as a whole was as much affected by the movements of the Axial Era as our own age has been affected by the general spread of Marxism, and by the introduction of the methods of empirical science since the latter part of the seventeenth century. One supreme effect of this in the sphere of religion was the challenge to objective ceremonial sacrifice, for again and again in the extracts which follow we shall observe the speakers inveighing against it. But of course the main feature in the period is the tendency to frame a unitary conception of Deity. Adumbrations of this appeared much earlier in Egypt, but the development of moral monotheism or of monistic mysticism on any great scale belongs properly to the Axial Era.

We shall begin with extracts from the alleged genuine prophetic utterances of the Iranian prophet Zarathustra, and then pass on to give specimens of the literature of India's great Upanishadic age, following this with extracts from the early oral traditions of Buddhism, which were of course not reduced to script until long after the passing away of Gautama himself.

After the above, we shall have typical passages from the great Chinese sages, beginning with Confucius, and passing on to Mo-ti, Mencius, the author of the *Tao-te-King*,\* and other later notabilities.

\* Probably not Lao-tze himself (who is a very shadowy figure), but one of his school.

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It will only be right to append here some extracts in illustration of the assertions made in my earlier book on Hebrew and Christian religion,\* but side by side with these we must certainly have some outstanding passages from Hellenistic literature, since the Christian movement did not arise in a void, but in a world whose best minds were nurtured upon the masters of Hellas, as studied in schools of rhetoric.

The rise of a great religion founded upon belief in a supreme historical Incarnation renders it just and necessary that we should look at some of the literature produced by the so-called incarnation-period in India. I shall therefore give at this point some extracts from the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Ramayana*, and some typical specimens of Indian *bhakti* hymns, many of which, as Sir Charles Eliot has pungently said, constitute a sort of tropical *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, though I think he might have more appropriately said a sort of tropical *Methodist Hymn Book*.

Some passages will also be found added to the Buddhist selection of texts which are drawn from the literature of Mahayana Buddhism. The latter is deeply influenced by the incarnational movement, and these passages might therefore be regarded properly as belonging to the post-biblical section, but it has seemed more convenient not to separate them from the other Buddhist documents, especially as the dependence of Mahayana stories upon the Gospels is not established, although more recently discovered evidence renders it extremely probable.

### § I

## ZOROASTRIAN LITERATURE

The problem presented by any attempt to elucidate the sacred books of the Parsis, i.e. the Avesta, is well defined by Ernst Herzfeld in his complicated two-volume work, published by the Princeton University Press in 1947. He quotes and endorses the verdict of A. Meillet, published in 1924 by the Musée Guimet: 'Si l'on essaie de lire l'Avesta, on s'aperçoit immédiatement que la lecture en est impossible; pas un chapitre ne forme une unité, pas un morceau ne se suit d'un bout

\* *Comparative Religion*, Ch. IX (Pelican Books).

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à l'autre. C'est une suite de fragments, à vrai dire, un champ de ruines informes, où ne se reconnaît aucun ordre.... On ne peut traduire les gathas d'une manière sure et complète.' The interpreting of the Avesta is an eminently archaeological task. Text-criticism of the Avesta is still as undeveloped as Biblical criticism was in 1753 at the time of Dr Astruc. One goes on translating the whole as it stands, applying schemes developed in editing classical authors but unfit for this material. Our real task to-day is to isolate authentic fragments whose interest is great, and then try to put the right fragments together.

Let us therefore begin with a short outline of the contents of the whole corpus, and then see whether we cannot select a few pieces from the Gathas which give us insight into the mind of Zarathustra himself, and conclude with a few remarks on the use of this sacred corpus by the Parsi community.

'Zendavesta' means, as we might put it: 'Text and Commentary' ('Avesta' = original text; 'Zend' = comment). The preliminary point is that Parsi sacred books, like the Hebrew, include the entire literature of a nation over a considerable period. Hence they are equally miscellaneous in character. The language is a dead one, and part of it is considered by Herzfeld to be a later version of an older Aramaic tongue. In any case it may not have been committed to writing for many centuries, prior to which it was transmitted orally. It is thus unlikely that we can be sure of arriving at the true original text: we can only do so approximately. The position is considerably worse than in the case of the Bible, and very much worse than in the case of the New Testament. Then again the order is not chronological. In Bleek's English version of Professor Spiegel's translation, made for the English-speaking Parsi community and for propaganda purposes, the first item is the *Vendidad*, which is rather like Leviticus or Deuteronomy, in that Ahura Mazda is represented as speaking to Zarathustra and giving him detailed legalistic injunctions. But no one supposes that this is the work of the prophet himself; it is a priestly document composed centuries after his death, and gives none of his teaching. After the *Vendidad* come the *Vispered* and the *Yasna*. These are liturgical, and form a sort of hymn and prayer book, but not for the laity, only for the priests – the presence of a congregation not being required at all. Embedded in the *Yasna* are the Gathas, which are now



generally regarded as the only portions of the Avesta which are actually the work of Zarathustra. To these therefore we shall return again presently. These are followed by the *Khordan Avesta* (or Little Avesta), which comprises the Yashts in praise of angelic beings or lesser divinities, together with certain prayers and other ritual pieces. It would be a good discipline to compare all this material with the contents of the ritual portions of the Vedas, since the Iranis of Persia are obviously cousins to the Aryan invaders of India. The later Avesta is not in the early dialect, and originated in the Achaemenian period.

We have also to take account of the later Zoroastrian religion under the Sassanian dynasty, third century A.D., in which the Magian priesthood translated the early documents into the Pahlavi dialect, and no doubt in doing so corrupted the text, besides adding much commentary which cannot pretend to represent the necessary logical development of Zarathustra's own teaching.

The chief liturgical work in use by the Zoroastrians of to-day is the *Yasna*, and embedded in it are the five groups of hymns called Gathas, containing seventeen hymns in all. These Gathas are actually the oldest element in the Zendavesta or sacred corpus of books, and it is now generally believed that in them we have preserved some of the actual utterances of Zarathustra himself. The poems are in very archaic language, and their metres, which are varied, are rather elaborate. Like some of the Psalms, they contain autobiographical details. Thus we read:

To what land shall I go to flee, whither to flee? – From nobles and my peers they sever me, nor are the people pleased with me, nor the untruthful rulers of the land. How am I to please Thee, Ahura Mazda [this is Zoroaster's name for God]? I know wherefore I am without success; because few cattle are mine, and for that I have but few folk. I cry unto Thee, see Thou to it, Ahura, granting me support as friend gives to friend. Teach me by the right how to acquire Good Thought. Elsewhere he refers to his call to be a prophet:

As the Holy One I knew Thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me and asked me, Who art thou? – Whose

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art thou? – By what sign wilt thou appoint the days for questioning about thine and thee? – Then I said to Him: First, Zarathustra am I, true hater of the false man to the uttermost of my power, but to the righteous would I be a powerful support, that I may win the future things of the Infinite kingdom, according as I praise and sing Thee, O Mazda.

As the Holy One I knew Thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me. To His question, For what wilt thou make decisions? – I made reply: At every offering of reverence to Thy fire, I will bethink me of Right so long as I have power. Then show me Right, upon whom I call.

The name Ahura Mazda was not invented by Zarathustra, but it has been found, with a slightly different spelling, in an Assyrian inscription of a very much earlier date. It seems to mean 'The Lord, the Wise One', and was presumably adopted by Zarathustra out of some much older religious vocabulary.

Good Thought and Right are referred to almost as though they were separate deities, but it is probable that they were thought of by Zarathustra as attributes of Ahura Mazda, or at most as ministering angelic beings serving his will.

The antiquity of the rite connected with the sacred Fire will be observed. Plainly it was time-honoured even in Zarathustra's day, and we can well imagine that it goes back to the period when the proto-Nordic peoples were in a nomadic state and moving from camp-fire to camp-fire.

In the main however the Gathas are songs of *praise*, directed towards Ahura Mazda. It is difficult to reproduce the effect of the metre in English, so we will begin with a short prose rendering by Dr Moulton, which gives the sense in the same way that our English Prayer Book gives that of the Hebrew Psalms. Moulton attempted on another occasion to translate some of the Gathas in metre, using chiefly what is known as the *sloka*, a trochaic rhythm which is employed, as we have seen elsewhere, in the great Sanskrit epics of India, and was made familiar to English readers by Tennyson, who used it in his poem 'Locksley Hall'.

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Here then is one of Moulton's prose translations out of Gatha 50:

May the Creator of Wisdom teach me His ordinances through Good Thought that my tongue may have a pathway.

For You I will harness the swiftest steeds, stout and strong, by the prompting of Your praise, that Ye may come hither, O Mazda, Right and Good Thought. May Ye be ready for my help.

With verses that are recognized as those of pious zeal I will come before You with outstretched hands, before You, O Thou Right, with the worship of the faithful man, before You with the capacity of Good Thought.

With these prayers I would come and praise You, O Mazda and Right, with actions of Good Thought. If I be master of my own destiny as I will, then I will take thought for the protection of the wise in the same.

Those actions that I shall achieve, and those done aforetime, and those, O Good Thought, that are precious in the sight, the rays of the sun, the bright uprisings of the days, all is for your praise, O Right and Ahura Mazda.

Your praiser, Mazda, will I declare myself and be, so long, O Right, as I have strength and power. May the Creator of the world accomplish through Good Thought its fulfilment and all that most perfectly answers to His Will.

From the above it will be seen that Mazda, Right, and Good Thought are so interchangeably used that they almost give the effect of a Trinity.

Two stanzas may be given from Yasna 44, showing the rendering by Moulton of the trochaic metre:

This I ask Thee – tell me truly, tell me duly, Holy Lord –  
How to worship with a service worthy Thee, O King  
adored.

Teach me, Wise One, as the heavenly may the earthly, as to  
friend

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Friend may speak – so may the kindly Right his timely succour bring,  
And with Heaven's Good Thought to us ward in His gracious power descend.  
Tell me duly, tell me truly, as I pray, O Holy King –  
When the Highest Life is dawning, at Thy Kingdom's opening,  
Shall the dooms of Heaven's tribunal give to every man his due? –  
Surely he – the holy prophet, to his watchful soul doth lay  
All men's sin, yet ever friendly, doth the worlds of life renew.

It will be noted that Zarathustra is here concerned with the same complex of ideas as, at a much later date, Mohammed, to wit, the transcendent majesty of God, the Day of Judgement, and the place of himself, the prophet of Ahura Mazda, in connexion with that Day of Judgement. But the extent to which Zarathustra really conceived of Deity as One and Sole is still ambiguous, for in the course of Yasna 31 we read:

For the prayer to Right and Mazda and whatever Lords there be,  
Destiny and Duty invoking, Best Thought, do Thou seek for me  
Heaven's All Might, for war with falsehood, so to win the victory.

It may well be that the Iranian prophet was as much divided in his mind as the later Arabian one over the status of minor divinities, or, again, as the worshippers at the Altar of Heaven in China. Zarathustra, Mohammed, and the pious Chinese never seem quite as sure as the writers of some of the Hebrew Psalms that the Amesha Spentas, the Djinns, and the lesser Shen are not entitled to some measure of cultus. They could not say, as the writer of the ninety-sixth Psalm did, that all the gods of the *goyim* were things of nought, or as the pro-

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phetic writer of deutero-Isaiah, 'I am Yahweh, and there is none beside.' One fancies this may be equally true of the modern sect-Shinto monotheist.

I will now give a rendering of an entire Gatha, one of the longest, and also one which has hitherto been thought most clearly to express the mind of Zarathustra. The translation claims to be as literal as possible, but part of the metrical paraphrase of the same Gatha by Moulton has been given above.

### *From the Gathas: Yasna 44*

This Gathic poem is of a uniform structure, and consists of a series of questions addressed by Zarathustra in the role of prophet to the Supreme Lord who is designated Ahura Mazda. Professor Duchesne-Guillemin in his valuable edition of the Gathas has pointed out that Schaefer in 1940 drew attention to the traditional form of the poem in Indo-Germanic literature: in the Edda it occurs at least twice:

Tell me this, O Alvis, &c.

Tell me this, O Fjolsvithr – this I ask of Thee and desire to know.

Dr Ballou in his American version prints only eleven stanzas, but the rendering here given is the longer recension, of twenty stanzas:

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:

That in response to my worship – such as is due to a Being like unto Thee –

A wise One like unto Thee may reveal unto me as to a friend how I should reverence Thee.

And that in as much as Justice lends to us his friendly aid, He may come to us through Good Thought.

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:

When will the best level of existence begin,

And will the rewards fall upon the heads of those who have desired them?

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For this man [i.e. Z. himself], sanctified by Justice, restrains  
by his spirit

The power that heals life, for the well-being of all, as a  
sworn friend, O Wise One.

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:

Who at the Creation was the first father of Justice? –

Who assigned their path to the sun and the stars? –

Who decreed the waxing and waning of the moon, if it was  
not Thee? –

This I would know, O Wise One, and other matters as well.

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:

Who hath fixed the earth below, and the heaven above with  
its clouds that it might not be moved? –

Who hath appointed the waters and the green things upon  
the earth? –

Who hath harnessed to the wind and the clouds their  
steeds? –

Who, O Wise One, is the Creator of Good Thought? –

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:

What artificer hath made the light and the darkness? –

What artificer hath made sleeping and waking? –

Who hath made morning, midday, and eventide,

To indicate to the enlightened being his tasks? –

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:

Are matters indeed as I desire to declare them to be? –

Does Devotion indeed support Justice in its actions? –

Is it indeed by Good Thought that Thou hast founded Thy  
Kingdom? –

For whom hast Thou fashioned kine as the source of well-  
being? –

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
Who hath fashioned Devotion, consecrated together with  
Dominion? –

Who hath ordained that sons should treat their fathers with  
respect? –

Thus do I strive to recognize in Thee, O Wise One,  
Together with the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all things.

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda, answer me well  
(In order that I may frame my virtue after Thine instruc-  
tion, O Wise One,

And after the words which I have received from Good  
Thought,

And that I may know that which in life is conformable to  
Justice):

After what manner shall my soul, when it hath arrived at the  
Good, be enraptured? –

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
Is it, that in return for every clear-sighted perception which  
I shall have consecrated,

The Lord of the Kingdom, even Thou, O Wise One,  
Thou who inhabitest the same dwelling as Justice and Good  
Thought,

Shalt fulfil to me the promises of Kingdoms above?–

This I demand of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
Must it be that one should observe that religion  
Which my teaching announces, and which is of all things  
the best,

Through desire of Thy goods, and observe it by words and  
deeds

Of devotion – which, together with Justice, make my affairs  
to prosper? –

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This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
Doth Devotion extend herself to those to whom Thy religion is proclaimed, O Wise One? –  
It is indeed I who have been ordained by Thee from the beginning to do this;  
All others I regard with enmity of mind.\*

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
Who, among those whom I address, is just and who is wicked? –  
Which of the two: is it I who am evil?  
Or is it he who would deprive me of Thy help who is the evil one? –  
How can one not think that it is he who is evil? –

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me truly:  
[How] shall we relieve ourselves of evil  
In casting it back upon those who, full of rebelliousness,  
Have no care to follow after Justice  
And take no pains to consult the Good Thought? –

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
[How] shall I deliver evil into the hands of Justice  
In order that it may cast it down according to the precepts of Thy doctrine,  
In order that it may provoke a powerful breach with the wicked,  
And bring upon them, O wise One, blindness and hatred? –

\* The meaning of this would seem to be: 'Is Devotion confined to those to whom I am predestined to teach the true doctrine, and are the rest of mankind as they seem to me to be, children of wrath?'

A somewhat similar thought appears in chapter xiv of St John, where Jude is made to say to Jesus: 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?' Probably all earnest prophets have tended to feel a cleavage between the unresponsive multitude and the smaller number who receive their message gladly, and to interpret it as perhaps being due to a divine dispensation. Even Jesus himself declares: 'Many are called, but few are chosen.'



## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
If Thou hast power, together with Justice, to avert that from  
me?

When the two armies meet together, to which of the two,  
According to the order which Thou maintainest, wilt Thou  
give the victory, O Wise One?

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
Who is it who, victorious, will protect beings by Thy  
teaching? -

What visible marks will be given to me [whereby I shall  
know him]? -

Let me know the master who will heal creation.

May it be given to all those from whom Thou expectest it,  
To obey Him, by Good Thought, O Wise One.

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:  
Shall I with Thine aid attain to my goal, O Wise One? -  
May I unite myself to Thee, and may my word be with  
power,

So that uprightness and immortality may unite together,  
according to Thy commandment,  
To the champion of Justice.

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:

May I obtain as reward from Justice

Two mares and a stallion

And also a camel

Which have been promised to me, O Wise One, as well as  
Thy gift of Uprightness and Immortality? -

This I ask of Thee, O Ahura Mazda; answer me well:

He who withholds the reward from him who has earned it,  
He who gives it not according to his undertaking,

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With what punishment shall he be punished in this present time,  
Knowing that which awaiteth him in the end? –

The false gods, have they then been good masters? –

I ask it of those who, in their worship,

Behold the sacrificer and his attendant deliver the ox to fury;

And the chief magician cause him to yield up his life with groans,

And who do not put liquid dung [or rather perhaps ‘pour libations’] upon the field to make it prosper, according to Justice.

This long poem is a good typical example of the kind of literature attributed to Zarathustra. It must be clear that the translation, taken at its face value, represents monotheism emerging from polytheism, and monotheism of a rather fine calibre, not perhaps far removed from that which began to emerge in the Vedic hymns to Varuna (and which unfortunately did not come to full stature). Portions of the hymn seem like echoes from the final chapters of the Book of Job, though of course there is no reason for supposing any actual kinship between them. It ought to be taken as a whole, and not with any exclusion of the somewhat naïve ending, in which the prophet seems to imply that like the Vedic poets or *hotars* who composed hymns for religious occasions, he expects to receive an honorarium for his services. To us, who read it centuries later, the latter may seem rather like bathos, but we need to remember that such naïve appeals belong to the primitive depths of human nature, and that similar appeals occur at the conclusion of some of our most loved Christmas carols, as well as at the end of the village plough- or fertility-plays, which, though they now persist in places merely as a bit of fun, were originally serious representations intended to promote the growth of the crops.

The word for ‘attendant’ in the final stanza, *usig*, is not known elsewhere in Iranian, but occurs in the *Rig-Veda*.

Having said all this, I am bound to confess that the translation given

above, though based on that of persons who have hitherto been regarded as reputable authorities, is seriously disputed by one modern scholar of repute. He is only prepared to endorse the rendering of stanzas 3, 4, 5, and 6, and he has suggested that there is but one other series of consecutive stanzas, i.e. stanzas 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Yasna 30, which is capable of being safely rendered in translation. He rejects a good many individual renderings, and even goes so far as to say that most translations of the Gathic poems are 'equally possible and equally impossible'. He renders stanza 2 of Yasna 44 in a way which he says is perfectly correct according to all grammatical rules, though entirely different from that hitherto proffered by the best authorities:

He who strives for the desired things to be profitable [or: for the dumb creatures to derive profit] at the beginning of the best existence [or: he who first strives for the desired things of the best existence to be profitable], is he indeed a watcher over the *irixta* [a word which may mean either 'bequest' or 'transgression'] for all through Truth, through the Spirit a friend, a healer of existence, O Mazda?

Regarding stanza 9 he says that if he were 'forced under threats' to translate it, he would say:

Is the religion which I purify the reward of the clear-sighted, through the high Power, which reward the Lord of Power like unto you, who dwells in the same house as Truth and Good Thought, promises?

From the foregoing it must be clear that one who is among the most recent of our Iranian scholars does not consider that Yasna 44, which has so often been translated and given as an example of the teaching of Zarathustra, is really capable of carrying the weight which has been put upon it. It seems best to give this individual opinion alongside of some of the older translations, in order to show how difficult it is for us at the present day to arrive at the exact meaning of an ancient religious poem which has passed through a

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great number of generations of oral transmission before being committed to writing.

I give in conclusion the five stanzas from Yasna 30 which my informant considers to be the only other consecutive set of stanzas which can be reliably translated:

Open your ears to hear what is the sovereign good [*summum bonum*];

Contemplate with clear mind the two ways  
Between which every man must choose for himself;  
Being ware in advance of that which the great ordeal  
[judgement] shall decide in our favour.

Now in the beginning the two spirits which are as it were  
twins

Are the one good, the other evil,  
In thought, word, and deed. And between these two  
The wise make a good choice, but not the foolish.

And when the two spirits encounter one another  
They establish the origin of life and not-life,  
And in the end the worst state is for the wicked,  
But for the just, Good Thought.

Of these two spirits, the evil chooses to make evil things,  
But the Most Holy Spirit, clothed with the everlasting  
heavens, is on the side of Justice;  
And thus do all those whose pleasure it is to satisfy  
The Wise Lord [Ahura Mazda] through good deeds.

As between these two, the false gods never choose good,  
For error took possession of them while they were deciding  
what to do,

So that they choose Evil Thought,  
Then ran they to join themselves unto madness, to pervert  
by it the ways of mankind.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

Towards the beginning of the third century A.D. the dynasty of the Sassanians founded a new Persian empire. Its rulers sought to ally themselves with the Magi or priestly caste, and the latter, recognizing that their position depended much upon paying service to the prestige of the great prophetic figure of Zarathustra, caused the traditional texts to be translated into Pahlavi, the language then in use in Persia. It was this which led to the codification of the *Zendavesta* more or less as we have it. The theologians of the period built up what we should call a system of dogmatics, in which they took some account of Greek thought, so that a new series of sacred books now appeared, the *Bundahishn*, which is an attempt at cosmology, the *Ard Viraf*, which is eschatological, and is perhaps one of the earliest attempts at a description of Heaven and Hell (the ancestor of the work of Dante), the *Menogi Khrad*, a sort of apocalypse, and the *Shayist-ne-shayist*, which concerns ritual.

In the middle of the seventh century came the Moslem conquest, and during the succeeding two centuries a further series of Pahlavi books was produced, showing the influence of Moslem theology, among which the *Dinkard*, the *Dadistan-i-denig*, and the *Zadsparam* may be mentioned.

It is difficult to estimate rightly the use made to-day of all these sacred books by Parsis. It is generally said that the Parsi priests are not conspicuous for their learning, and that the liturgical use of the texts involves little more than mastering them by rote in a language which the pupil very likely does not understand. This would seem to contrast unfavourably with the high standard of education and culture enjoyed by the Parsi laity. The situation is unstable, and it may be that a revival will be forced upon the clergy by the laity, or conversely that the best Parsis will drift into other religions or into some form of humanism. However much the actual historical value of the original teaching of Zarathustra may be, as a landmark in the emergence of monotheism, it is now very ancient, and as some Parsis said at Benares not long ago to a Christian visitor: 'What we need is a living voice'.\*

\* Since the above was written, there has appeared a fine and massive work on Zoroastrianism by Professor R. C. Zaehner of Oxford (Weidenfeld & Nicolson).

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## THE UPANISHADS

The reader who refers back to page 83 will see where these come in. They were first introduced to Europeans in 1801 by a French scholar, Anquetil du Perron, who translated into Latin a Persian version which contained sixty of them. Part of the enthusiasm with which they were greeted therefore by such persons as Schopenhauer and von Schlegel may be set down to knowledge of them at third hand, and through a westernized translation. The word 'Upanishad' means 'sitting close or opposite to', and so, eventually, 'secret or confidential teaching'. There are in existence some 250 or more Upanishads, of which about fifteen are of greater importance than the rest, and are ancient. Others are of much later date, and even post-Christian. Of the oldest, six are in archaic prose, five in archaic epic metre, and three in later classical prose, but even all these are composite and contain repetitions. All or almost all Upanishads are in effect the archives of schools or *ashramas*, for the most part orally transmitted, and preserving a miscellany of matter which each school had come to value, sometimes in the form of lecture-notes to be memorized, sometimes liturgical, sometimes in the form of dialogues, together with fragments interpolated from the Vedic Canon. There is no *a priori* objection against the appearance of new ones. Debendranath Tagore composed one in 1848 which he called the *Brahmi Upanishad*, and many sectarian ones were composed between A.D. 400 and 1200 to connect the sects with the Veda, but these would not be regarded by strict Brahmins as canonical. The Upanishads proper are attached to the Vedic canon, but not equally to all parts of it – the *Rig-Veda* has only two, the *Sama-Veda* only two, the *Yajur-Veda* seven. All the others are connected with the *Atharva-Veda*, where it was easier to make additions to the text, and this would account for the curious interpolations, such as love-potions, which seem so unphilosophical and incongruous.

There are many parallel passages throughout. A discourse proving that breath is the vital constituent of any human being is found in five Upanishads. The *Chandogya* and *Brihadaranyaka*, as well as the *Kaushitaki*, contain a narrative of a priest being instructed by a king, in the

first two almost in identical words. The theme of the state of the soul after death is discussed not only in the *Katha*, but also in the *Brihadaranyaka* and *Kaushitaki*, in the latter in a dialogue with a king, Ajatasatru.

Anyone who sets out to find one or more complete philosophical systems in the Upanishads will soon be disappointed. Most of them are little more than memorized records of various schools of wisdom, which gathered themselves round individual teachers, some of whose names are given in them. They tend to be formless, repetitive, and full of seeming inconsistencies. It would however be unjust to sweep them on one side for these reasons. Treated seriously, they show the tentative beginnings of revolutionary spiritual thought on all manner of subjects, though they do not perhaps make any pretensions to have achieved finality, except in one or two matters, such as the identity of the One Absolute Brahma with the One Atman, and the doctrine that all is Brahman, and that this is the real solution of most of life's problems. Various opinions have been held as to the alleged development of ideas of cosmogony. Some think that it evolves, others that certain doctrines stand aside from the main trend of Upanishadic thought. The emergence of theism comes late, and is to be seen in the *Svetasvatara*, which is nevertheless most probably pre-Christian. But it does not easily maintain itself, and in the very same document, as also in the *Gita*, we find the famous passage which declares in effect *tat tvam asi*, 'Thou art It.'

It is the later commentators and thinkers who have developed, from these ancient records of the schools, systems which are more or less complete and consistent, such as the pluralistic or Samkhya philosophy, the monistic or Vedanta philosophy, the modified monism of Ramanuja, and the complete theism of Madhva.

In the Upanishads themselves there is however one important sign of development in teaching, namely in respect of the attitude towards moral distinction between good and evil.

In the free speculation of the earlier Upanishadic schools the assertion is made again and again that the world of pure thought to which the possessor of *vidya* or supreme knowledge is admitted is devoid of all such distinctions. This is seen especially in the following passages from the great *Brihadaranyaka* and *Chandogya Upanishads*.

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*Brih.* 4.4.22. Him [who knows this] these two do not overcome – neither the thought 'Hence I did wrong' nor the thought 'Hence I did right'. Verily he overcomes them both. What he has done and what he has not done do not affect him.

*Brih.* 5.14.8. Verily if they lay much [wood] on a fire, it burns it all. Even so, one who knows this, although he commits very much evil, consumes it all, and becomes clean and pure, ageless and immortal.

*Brih.* 4.3.21–22. As a man when in the embrace of a beloved wife knows nothing within or without, so this person when in the embrace of the intelligent Soul [i. e. the one great Atman] knows nothing within or without. Verily that is his [true] form.... There a father becomes not a father: a mother not a mother: the worlds not the worlds: the gods not the gods: the Vedas not the Vedas: a thief not a thief.... He is not followed by the good, he is not followed by evil, for then he has passed beyond all the sorrows of the heart.

The *Chandogya* declares in effect that to the enlightened knower good and evil are conceptions of partial knowledge which can no longer obtain in the light of full knowledge. They are only verbal distinctions.

*Ch.* 7.2.1. Verily if there were no speech, neither right nor wrong would be known, neither true nor false, neither good nor bad, neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Speech indeed makes all this known.

*Ch.* 5.24.3. As a rush-reed laid on a fire would be burned up, even so are burned up all the evil of him who offers the Agni-hotra sacrifice, knowing it thus [i.e. as spiritually interpreted].

*Ch.* 8.4.1–2. Over that bridge [i.e. into the Brahma-world] there cross neither day nor night, nor old age nor death, nor sorrow, nor well-doing, nor evil-doing. All evils turn back therefrom, for that Brahma-world is freed from evil.



In the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* there is an even more uncompromising passage:

*Kau.* 3.1. He who understands Me [Indra is the speaker, representing the great Atman] – by no deed whatsoever of his is the world injured, not by stealing, not by killing an embryo, not by the murder of his mother, not by the murder of his father; if he has done any evil, the dark colour departs not from his face [i. e. he does not turn pale with guilt].

Hume remarks that this is not the same doctrine which we find among the Greek sages, and it might be said also among the sages of China (certainly this would be true of Mencius), i. e. that virtue is to be found in knowledge, and that he who desires to lead the good life should seek knowledge, so that the result of teaching is a virtuous life. Here in these earlier Upanishads it is affirmed that the possession of *vidya* or mystical knowledge actually cancels all past sins and even permits the knower to continue unblushingly in what seems to be much evil, with perfect impunity. This is a dangerous doctrine, and it has been held that it is probably only a somewhat strained and exaggerated way of saying that the truly enlightened soul cannot in the very nature of things do an evil deed, for if he could he would not be truly enlightened. Whether this is actually the case is doubtful, since, as we see above, the doctrine of the Upanishads is that the enlightened person rises to a plane on which moral terms simply have no meaning. In the final stage of the perfected man there can be no action, so there can in consequence be neither moral nor immoral acts. It may however be argued that since to Hindu thought imperfection is the cause of immorality, man when perfected will certainly be beyond evil, and since evil is merely the negation of good, the final state of perfection is one which, while 'good' in an absolute sense, does not need the use of a term which only has meaning when used in antithesis. In practice this may well lead some persons to a rather repulsive form of antinomianism, and observers say that it does. It must however be pointed out that to say 'Know and do what you like' is really no worse than to say 'Love and do what you like', in the sense in which St Augustine the Great is believed to have

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said it. Still Hindu teachers do sometimes speak of morality as though it only possessed a qualified value in preparing the way for the soul to receive enlightenment.

As the Upanishadic age developed, some thinkers saw that this was dangerous logic, and so in the *Katha Upanishad*, for example, one finds it denounced, and *virtue* declared to be equally requisite with *vidya*, if perfection is to be attained.

2.24. He who has not ceased from bad conduct cannot obtain Brahma by *vidya*.

3.7-8. He who has not understanding, who is unmindful and ever impure, reaches not the goal from which he is born no more.

The final condition of the perfected soul, in which subject and object are one, is usually compared to that of a person who is in deep dreamless sleep (*susupta*). This is not what we should mean by non-existence or annihilation (since it is held that the soul is immortal), but it is the 'going-into-the-Great-Self', and since after that there can be no object upon which the little self may exercise its faculties, the state of union is for all practical purposes a state of unconsciousness (*turiya*). Yet both Hinduism and Buddhism describe this state as one of ecstatic bliss (Nirvana [H.] and Nibbana [B.]), both meaning 'extinction of the flames of desire', or, as we might say, 'of the libido'. Death itself does not automatically usher into this, but only death coming while one has a particular disposition. To anticipate *susupta* in this life involves training oneself to enter into a condition of trance, the final stage in yogic technique, when one attains what is called *samadhi* – 'putting together', or 'absorption', which may be either temporary or perpetual. This kind of immortality seems to be accepted by Keyserling, the Estonian philosopher, in his essay 'Immortality'. It is plainly quite different from the standard Christian conception of the future life, in which there are 'social joys' – even though St Bernard declares that their nature is beyond his knowledge – while in the eternal *Civitas Dei* of the Book of Revelation: 'his servants do Him service'. We are not here concerned as to which conception might be.

better, the Hindu or the Christian, or more likely to be correct, at least in its use of metaphor. It is enough to note that they *are different*.

So in *Brih.* 4.3.17:

In this state of waking, having travelled around, and seen good and bad, he hastens again, according to the entrance and place of origin, back to the state of sleeping (*susupta*).

and the *Brih.* goes on to give Yajñavalkya's definition of *susupta* (verses 23-32):

Verily, while he does not there see with the eyes, he is verily seeing, though he does not see what is [usually] to be seen; for there is no cessation of the seeing [of a seer], because of his imperishability [as a seer]. It is not however a second thing, other than himself and separate, that he may see....

Verily he does not there think, he is verily thinking, though he does not think what is usually to be thought; for there is no cessation of the thinking [of a thinker], because of his imperishability [as a thinker]. It is not however a second thing, other than himself and separate, of which he may think.

This is all repeated nine times, in respect of smelling, tasting, speaking, hearing, touching, and knowing, as well as of seeing and thinking. Finally the sage concludes:

Verily where there seems to be another, there the one might see, smell, taste, speak to, hear, think of, touch, and know the other. But an ocean, a seer alone without duality, becomes he whose world is Brahma, O King – thus Yajñavalkya instructed him. This is man's highest path. This is his highest achievement. This is his highest world. This is his highest bliss. Only on a part of this bliss other creatures have their living.

Yajñavalkya appears to concede however that in this life man cannot always be in the state of *susupta*, for he goes on to say that man, having travelled round, and having enjoyed this state of *susupta*, hastens again, according to the entrance and place of origin, back to the state of waking.

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The principal Upanishads are formally regarded as part of the Vedas, but they are not to be identified with the four great Vedic books, since they are to a great extent critical (indeed very critical) reflections upon the latter. The seven longer extracts which now follow will illustrate their main features. For further information readers may be referred to Chapter 3 in my *Hinduism*,\* and also to the larger work by Professor Hume.†

#### (i) *From the Kena Upanishad*

##### *First Khanda*

This extract – in answer to a question – states the doctrine of the prevenience of Brahma.

By whom impelled soars forth the mind projected?  
By whom enjoined goes forth the earliest breathing?  
By whom impelled this speech do people utter?  
The eye, the ear – what god, pray, them enjoineeth?

That which is the hearing of the ear, the thought of the  
mind,  
The voice of speech, as also the breathing of the breath,  
And the sight of the eye! Past these escaping, the wise,  
On departing from this world, become immortal.

There the eye goes not;  
Speech goes not, nor the mind.  
We know not, we understand not  
How one would teach It.

Other, indeed, is It than the known,  
And moreover above the unknown.  
– Thus have we heard of the ancients  
Who to us have explained It.

\* Hutchinson's University Library Series, 1949.

† *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, O.U.P., 1931.

That which is unexpressed with speech (*vāc*, voice),  
That with which speech is expressed –  
That indeed know as Brahma,  
Not this that people worship as this.

That which one thinks not with thought (*manas*, mind),  
[or, That which thinks not with a mind,]  
That with which they say thought (*manas*) is thought –  
That indeed know as Brahma,  
Not this that people worship as this.

That which one sees not with sight (*cakṣus*, eye),  
[or, That which sees not with an eye,]  
That with which one sees sights (*cakṣūṃsi*) –  
That indeed know as Brahma,  
Not this that people worship as this.

That which one hears not with hearing (*śrotra*, ear),  
[or, That which hears not with an ear,]  
That with which hearing here is heard –  
That indeed know as Brahma,  
Not this that people worship as this.

That which one breathes (*prāṇiti*) not with breathing (*prāṇa*,  
breath),  
[or, That which breathes not with breath,]  
That with which breathing (*prāṇa*) is conducted (*prāṇīyate*) –  
That indeed know as Brahma,  
Not this that people worship as this.

(ii) *From the Katha Upanishad*

From the sixth Valli (st. 10–18). This extract, from the instruction given to the young Naçitekas by Yama, the god of the underworld (the Hindu Pluto, personifying death), describes the way to immortality through Yoga.

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When cease the five  
[Sense-]knowledges, together with the mind (*manas*),  
And the intellect (*buddhi*) stirs not –  
That, they say, is the highest course.

This they consider as Yoga –  
The firm holding back of the senses.  
Then one becomes undistracted.  
Yoga, truly, is the origin and the end.

Not by speech, not by mind,  
Not by sight can He be apprehended.  
How can He be comprehended  
Otherwise than by one's saying 'He is'?

He can indeed be comprehended by the thought 'He is'  
(*asti*)

And by [admitting] the real nature of both [his compre-  
hensibility and his incomprehensibility].

When he has been comprehended by the thought 'He is'  
His real nature manifests itself.

When are liberated all  
The desires that lodge in one's heart,  
Then a mortal becomes immortal!  
Therein he reaches Brahma!

When are cut all  
The knots of the heart here on earth,  
Then a mortal becomes immortal!  
– Thus far is the instruction.

There are a hundred and one channels of the heart.  
One of these passes up to the crown of the head.  
Going up by it, one goes to immortality.  
The others are for departing in various directions.

A Person of the measure of a thumb is the inner soul  
(*antarātman*),

Ever seated in the heart of creatures.

Him one should draw out from one's own body

Like an arrow-shaft out from a reed, with firmness.

Him one should know as the Pure, the Immortal –

Yea, Him one should know as the Pure, the Immortal.

Then Naçiketas, having received this knowledge

Declared by Death, and the entire rule of Yoga,

Attained Brahma and became free from passion, free from  
death.

And so may any other who knows this in regard to the Soul  
(*Atman*).

(iii) *From the Prasna Upanishad\**

A great hymn in praise of the Life-Force (st. 5-13).

As fire (*agni*), he warms. He is the sun (*sūrya*).

He is the bountiful rain (*parjanya*). He is the wind (*vāyu*).

He is the earth, matter (*rayi*), God (*deva*),

Being (*sat*) and Non-being (*asat*), and what is immortal.

Like the spokes on the hub of a wheel,

Everything is established on Life (*prāṇa*):

The Rig verses, the Yajus formulas, the Sāman chants,

The sacrifice, the nobility (*kṣatra*), and the priesthood  
(*brahman*)!

\* The doctrine implied in this hymn is of great antiquity. Even in the earlier *Rig-Veda* (Book I, hymn 164) is to be found a *brahmodya* or theological riddle ascribed to the *rishi* Dirghatamas, in which occurs the passage which is often taken to be the root and basis of all Indian philosophical theology:

They call It Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and Agni,

And also heavenly, beauteous-winged Garutman.

The Real is One, though sages name it variously, –

They call It Agni, Yama, Matarisvan.

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As the Lord of Creation (*prajāpati*), thou movest in the womb.

'Tis thou thyself that art born again.  
To thee, O Life, creatures here bring tribute –  
Thou, who dwellest with living beings!

Thou art the chief bearer [of oblations] to the gods!  
Thou art the first offering to the fathers!  
Thou art the true practice of the seers,  
Descendants of Atharvan and Angiras!

Indra art thou, O Life, with thy brilliance!  
Rudra art thou as a protector!  
Thou movest in the atmosphere  
As the sun (*sūrya*), thou Lord of lights!

When thou rainest upon them,  
Then these creatures of thine, O Life,  
Are blissful, thinking:  
'There will be food for all desire!'

A Vrātya art thou, O Life, the only seer,  
An eater, the real lord of all!  
We are the givers of thy food!  
Thou art the father of the wind (*mātarīśvan*).

That form of thine which abides in speech,  
Which abides in hearing, which abides in sight,  
And which is extended in the mind,  
Make propitious! Go not away!

This whole world is in the control of Life –  
E'en what is established in the third heaven!  
As a mother her son, do thou protect [us]!  
Grant to us prosperity (*śrī*) and wisdom (*prajñā*)



## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### (iv) *From the Mundaka Upanishad*

A typical condemnation of ritual sacrifice (str. 7-11).

Unsafe boats, however, are these sacrificial forms,  
The eighteen, in which is expressed the lower work.  
The fools who approve that as the better,  
Go again to old age and death.

Those abiding in the midst of ignorance,  
Self-wise, thinking themselves learned,  
Hard smitten, go around deluded,  
Like blind men led by one who is himself blind.

Manifoldly living in ignorance,  
They think to themselves, childishly: 'We have accomplished our aim!'  
Since doers of deeds (*karmin*) do not understand, because of passion (*rāga*),  
Therefore, when their worlds are exhausted, they sink down wretched.

Thinking sacrifice and merit is the chiefest thing,  
Naught better do they know – deluded!  
Having had enjoyment on the top of the heaven won by good works,  
They re-enter this world, or a lower.

They who practise austerity (*tapas*) and faith (*śraddhā*) in the forest,  
The peaceful (*śānta*) knowers who live on alms,  
Depart passionless (*vi-rāga*) through the door of the sun,  
To where is that immortal Person (*Purusha*), e'en the imperishable Spirit (*Atman*).

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#### (v) *From the Svetasvatara Upanishad*

Doctrinal extract from the sixth Adhyaya (st. 6-20). This is generally considered to be a relatively late Upanishad.

Higher and other than the world-tree, time, and forms

Is He from whom this expanse proceeds.

The bringer of right (*dharma*), the remover of evil (*pāpa*),  
the lord of prosperity –

Know Him as in one's own self (*ātma-stha*), as the immortal  
abode of all.

Him who is the supreme Mighty Lord (*Maheśvara*) of lords,

The supreme Divinity of divinities,

The supreme Ruler of rulers, paramount,

Him let us know as the adorable God, the Lord (*īś*) of the  
world.

No action or organ of his is found;

There is not seen his equal, nor a superior.

His high power (*śakti*) is revealed to be various indeed;

And innate is the working of his intelligence and strength.

Of Him there is no ruler in the world,

Nor lord; nor is there any mark (*liṅga*) of Him.

He is the Cause (*kāraṇa*), lord of the lords of sense-organs.

Of him there is no progenitor, nor Lord.

The one God who covers himself,

Like a spider, with threads

Produced from Primary Matter (*pradhāna*), according to his  
own nature (*svabhāvatā*) –

May He grant us entrance in Brahma!

The one God, hidden in all things,

All-pervading, the Inner Soul of all things,

The overseers of deeds (*karman*), in all things abiding,

The witness, the sole thinker, devoid of qualities (*nir-guṇa*),

The one controller of the inactive many,  
Who makes the one seed manifold –  
The wise who perceive Him as standing in one's self –  
They, and no others, have eternal happiness.

Him who is the constant among the inconstant, the intelligent among intelligences,  
The One among many, who grants desires,  
That Cause, attainable by discrimination and abstraction  
(*sāṃkhya-yoga*) –  
By knowing God, one is released from all fetters!

The sun shines not there, nor the moon and stars;  
These lightnings shine not, much less this [earthly] fire!  
After Him, as He shines, doth everything shine.  
This whole world is illumined with his light.

The one soul (*hamsa*) in the midst of this world –  
This indeed is the fire which has entered into the ocean.  
Only by knowing Him does one pass over death.  
There is no other path for going there.

He who is the maker of all, the all-knower, self-sourced,  
Intelligent, the author of time, possessor of qualities,  
omniscient,  
Is the ruler of Primary Matter (*pradhāna*) and of the spirit  
(*ksetra-jñā*), the lord of qualities (*guṇa*),  
The cause of reincarnation (*samsāra*) and of liberation  
(*mokṣa*), of continuance and of bondage.

Consisting of That, immortal, existing as the Lord,  
Intelligent, omnipresent the guardian of this world,  
Is He who constantly rules this world.  
There is no other cause found for the ruling.

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To Him who of old creates Brahmā,  
And who, verily, delivers to him the Vedas –  
To that God, who is lighted by his own intellect,  
Do I, being desirous of liberation, resort as a shelter –

To Him who is without parts, without activity, tranquil  
(*sānta*),  
Irreproachable, spotless,  
The highest bridge of immortality,  
Like a fire with fuel burned.

When men shall roll up space  
As it were a piece of leather,  
Then will there be an end of evil  
Apart from knowing God!

In this fine piece of metrical theology, we see an approximation to theism. The Supreme Deity, who is transcendent as well as immanent, is identified with the various gods of the Hindu pantheon (even with Rudra, the terrible personification of the destructive force of nature), and is called Mahesvara, or Ívara, mighty Lord or Lord.

#### (vi) *The Isa Upanishad (in extenso)*

The *Isa*, sometimes known as the *Isavasya* from its first word, is one of the five metrical old Upanishads, and Belvalkar places it in his second group, and does not consider it composite but entirely homogeneous. Beginners often choose it for study because it is short, without recognizing its difficulty and profundity. Small portions of it occur in the *Maitri* and *Brihadaranyaka*, but this has really no bearing upon its unity, since, as in the Gospels, pieces of the same tradition occur in more than one context. It only means that more than one school referred back to the same sacred logia. Vasu's edition, published in 1909, declares that it has a good claim to be the oldest of all the Upanishads. The reason given is that it occurs as the fortieth chapter in the *White Yajur-Veda*, while the other Upanishads are generally appended to the Brahmanas. It is therefore *mantra* rather than commentary. Vasu's edition gives also the commentary of

Madhva, the famous theistic commentator, who was at the opposite extreme from Sankara, the monist.

I am afraid that when readers come to study the text itself they will be perplexed by the great divergencies in the translation; the translations they must specially beware of are Mascaro's and Vasu's, since the former is rather a paraphrase, and the latter tries to create parallels between the Bible and the Upanishad which probably do not exist. Even Vasu's quotations from the *Ormazd Yasht* are tendentious.

The version given here is Hume's, but some of the principal variants appear in footnotes.

The invocation which precedes each Upanishad is not strictly speaking part of its text, but is like a Collect to be said before the reading of Scripture. It is, in effect, a liturgical preface intended to be chanted by teacher and pupil. In the present case it runs:

Om. May Brahman protect us both! May Brahman bestow  
upon us both the fruit of Knowledge!

May we both obtain the energy to acquire knowledge! May  
what we both study reveal the Truth!

May we cherish no ill-feeling towards each other!

Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!

Then follows the *Isa Upanishad* itself.

[Recognition of the unity underlying the diversity  
of the world]

By the Lord (*iśā*) enveloped must this all be –

Whatever moving thing there is in the moving world.

With this renounced, thou mayest enjoy.

Covet not the wealth of anyone at all.

[Non-attachment of deeds on the person of a renouncer]

Even while doing deeds here,

One may desire to live a hundred years.

Thus on thee – not otherwise than this is it –

The deed (*karman*) adheres not on the man.

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[The forbidding future for slayers of the Self]

Devilish (*asurya*) are those worlds called,  
With blind darkness (*tamas*) covered o'er!  
Unto them, on deceasing, go  
Whatever folk are slayers of the Self.

[The all-surpassing, paradoxical world-being]

Unmoving, the One (*ekam*) is swifter than the mind.  
The sense-powers (*deva*) reached not It, speeding on before.  
Past others running, This goes standing.  
In it Mātariśvan places action.

It moves. It moves not.  
It is far, and It is near.  
It is within all this,  
And It is outside of all this.

Now, he who on all beings  
Looks as just (*eva*) in the Self (*Atman*),  
And on the Self as in all beings –  
He does not shrink away from Him.

In whom all beings  
Have become just (*eva*) the Self of the discernor –  
Then what delusion (*moha*), what sorrow (*śoka*) is there,  
Of him who perceives the unity!

[Characteristics of the world-ruler]

He has environed. The bright, the bodiless, the scatheless,  
The sinewless, the pure (*suddha*), unpierced by evil (*a-papa-  
viddha*)!  
Wise (*kavi*), intelligent (*manisīn*), encompassing (*paribhu*),  
self-existent (*svayambhū*),  
Appropriately he distributed objects (*artha*) through the  
eternal years.

[Transcending, while involving, the antithesis of knowing]

Into blind darkness enter they  
That worship ignorance;  
Into darkness greater than that, as it were, they  
That delight in knowledge.

Other, indeed, they say, than knowledge!  
Other, they say, than non-knowledge!  
– Thus we have heard from the wise (*dhira*)  
Who to us have explained It.

Knowledge and non-knowledge –  
He who this pair conjointly (*saha*) knows,  
With non-knowledge passing over death,  
With knowledge wins the immortal.

[The inadequacy of any antithesis of being]

Into blind darkness enter they  
Who worship non-becoming (*a-sambhuti*);  
Into darkness greater than that, as it were, they  
Who delight in becoming (*sambhūti*).

Other, indeed – they say – than origin (*sambhava*)!  
Other – they say – than non-origin (*a-sambhava*)!  
– Thus have we heard from the wise  
Who to us have explained It.

[Becoming and destruction a fundamental duality]

Becoming (*sambhūti*) and destruction (*vināśa*) –  
He who this pair conjointly (*saha*) knows,  
With destruction passing over death,  
With becoming wins the immortal.

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#### [A dying person's prayer]

With a golden vessel  
The Real's face is covered o'er.  
That do thou, O Pūshan, uncover  
For one whose law is the Real to see.

O Nourisher (*pūsan*), the sole Seer (*ekarsi*), O Controller (*yama*), O Sun (*sūrya*), offspring of Prajāpati, spread forth thy rays! Gather thy brilliance (*tejas*)! What is thy fairest form – that of thee I see? He who is yonder, yonder Person (*purusa*) – I myself am he!

[My] breath (*vāyu*) to the immortal wind (*anila*)!  
This body then ends in ashes! Om!  
O Purpose (*kratu*), remember! The deed (*krta*) remember!  
O Purpose, remember! The deed remember!

#### [General prayer of petition and adoration]

O Agni, by a goodly path to prosperity (*rai*) lead us,  
Thou god who knowest all the ways!  
Keep far from us crooked-going sin (*enas*)!  
Most ample expression of adoration to thee would we  
render!

It will be noted that the last four stanzas are, like the invocation, of a liturgical nature. They are, in effect, prayers which have become associated with the instruction, and with which the person meditating upon the doctrinal part may fitly end his meditation.\*

\* The variations in the rendering of this Upanishad are typical of those to be found throughout the translations of all the others. I can give only a few examples.

Thus Sree Purohit Swami and W. B. Yeats, collaborating, have produced the following renderings:

Verse 1. Whatever lives is full of the Lord. Claim nothing; enjoy, do not covet His property.

Verse 4. The Self is one. Unmoving, it moves faster than the mind. The senses



(vii) *From the Maitri Upanishad*

*Kutsayana's Hymn of Praise*

Thou art Brahma, and verily Thou art Vishnu.  
 Thou art Rudra. Thou art Prajapati.  
 Thou art Agni, Varuna and Vayu.  
 Thou art Indra. Thou art the Moon.  
 Thou art food. Thou art Yama. Thou art the Earth.  
 Thou art All. Yea, Thou art the unskaken one.

For Nature's sake and for its own  
 Is existence manifold in Thee.

lag, but Self runs ahead. Unmoving, it outruns pursuit. Out of Self comes the breath that is the life of all things.

This makes sense and is reasonable English, but it is evidently not so literal as Hume's translation, though if the Swami is to be trusted, it may give the actual meaning of the original.

Swami Nikhilananda, on the other hand, publishing an English version in 1951, gives a rendering of these two verses which is rather nearer to that of Hume, but is accompanied by a commentary based on that of Sankara:

*Verse 1:* All this – whatever exists in this changing universe – should be covered by the Lord. Protect the Self by renunciation. Lust not after any man's wealth.

*Verse 4:* That non-dual Atman, though never striving, is swifter than the mind. The devas [the senses] cannot reach It, for it moves ever in front. Though standing still, It overtakes others who are running. Because of Atman, Vayus [the world-soul] apportion the activities of all.

*N.B.* Though patient of a well-nigh theistic exegesis, S. Nikhilananda seeks to cover the whole of his own interpretation with the comment: 'One should view the universe, through the knowledge of non-duality, as Atman alone.' This is pure Sankara. Commentaries by Ramanuja or Madhva and their disciples would be on different lines.

*Verse 12* again appears in different forms. Sree Purohit Swami and Yeats render it: Pin your faith to the seed of nature, stumble through the darkness of the blind; pin your faith to the shapes of nature, stumble through a darkness greater still.

Swami Nikhilananda translates this: Into a blind darkness they enter who worship only the unmanifested *prakriti* [i.e. the state prior to the creation of material forms]: but into greater darkness they enter who worship the manifested *Hiranyagarbha* [i.e. the primordial creation by Brahma in the cosmos, literally 'the golden germ' or 'source of golden light' – the Sun-deity].

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O Lord of all, hail unto Thee!  
The Soul of all, causing all acts,  
Enjoying all, all life art Thou!  
Lord of all pleasure and delight!

Hail unto Thee, O Tranquil Soul!  
Yea hail to Thee, most hidden One!  
Unthinkable, unlimited,  
Beginningless and endless too!

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### BUDDHIST TEXTS

The position of the Buddhist canonical books is very complicated, and may cause the reader some difficulty. The total amount of literature is enormous, and it is said that probably no monk has ever read the whole of it. There are at least four or five canonical collections. Of these the Pali canon is the best known and the most important. It professes to contain the works recognized by the council summoned together by the Emperor Asoka, and is reasonably consistent, though it obviously contains many strata which give divergent versions of the same text and varying accounts of the same episodes. Mrs Rhys Davids has tried to dissect out the oldest strata, but perhaps higher criticism has not yet gone far enough to enable us to judge the extent to which she is right in her opinions.\* Most of this Pali literature has been published by the Pali Text Society from manuscripts used at a large and important monastery in Ceylon, but the originals were composed in India. Sir Charles Eliot thinks that Pali, which bears somewhat the same relationship to Sanskrit that Italian does to Latin, was not the language, or at any rate the form of the language, spoken by Gautama himself, but that he probably spoke Magadhi, which Eliot says bears much the same relationship to Pali that Scotch or

\* See also Mr Arthur Waley's *The Real Tripitaka* (1951-2).

Yorkshire dialect bears to standard English, and which at the time of Asoka must have been understood over the greater part of India. Subsequently it died out there as a literary language, but became one in the outlying provinces, Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia, and Siam. Other Buddhist literature is in another local dialect, brought more or less into conformity with Sanskrit. The results remind us of the differences we know about in Greek, between Attic, Doric, and Ionian varieties, and between the language of the Homeric epics and that of Plato and later that of the Hellenistic Koinē. Eliot evidently likes Pali, and he says that it is a sonorous and harmonious language which has a rich vocabulary, and produces fine effects by gathering up into a single compound word an idea which in English needs a whole phrase for its expression. He gives as an example the passage:

attadipa atta sarana, añanna sarana: dhammadipa dhamma-sarana.

Be ye as those who have the Self as a lamp. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Hold fast to the Truth as a refuge.

Unlike the Upanishads, the usual form of Buddhist literature is not that of notes of a school, but that of sermons, delivered to a number of persons (very often a large concourse), and not spoken in privacy to an individual, though of course there are exceptions to this. The repetitions and headings are wearisome to us, but they enabled the faithful to memorize what they heard, and to this day the sermon is the main form of Buddhist propaganda. Readings of old discourses are the means by which the laity are enabled to recover and renew the spirit of their Founder, and the more he is regarded as the Incarnation of the Great Cosmic Buddha-Spirit, or Buddhist Logos, the more authoritative do they become. Nevertheless there is evidence that the sermons were not recorded in writing for a very long time, as much indeed as 400 years after the death of the Buddha, so that the accuracy of the records is clearly not beyond question. The documents frequently refer to 'reciters', and it is said sometimes that if the learning by heart does not go on, the suttas or logia will be forgotten and lost. The general view is that the writing down did not occur till about 80 B.C., and Elliot even says as late as 20 B.C.

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The Pali canon, which is received in Hinayana circles, such as those of Ceylon, is known as the 'Tripitaka' or three baskets (or transmission, suggesting a line of carriers with baskets). These three are respectively:

I. The *Vinaya*, or Book of Discipline, including the older *Patimokkha* or list of offences, with a commentary attached. Eliot compares it to the Book of Leviticus, but it is not so much concerned with ritual as the latter. I should myself classify it more with some Catholic or Jewish manuals of moral theology.

II. The *Sutta Pitaka*, which professes to contain the discourses, divided into five collections or Nikayas. The second of these, the *Majjhima Nikaya*, is the finest, and contains 152 discourses, and Eliot, and other scholars as well, think that the most authentic material is here. The *Samyutta* has shorter suttas, and some are in verse. The fourth, or *Anguttara*, is longer again, and is arranged in numerical groups; and the fifth is partly in verse, and contains hymns written by monks and nuns, and also the *Jatakas* or birth-stories, which are largely folk-tales, worked over and utilized by preachers to illustrate the teaching of the Buddha, much as the Franciscans use the popular tales in such a work as *Dormi secure* to illustrate their mission sermons. It is in these that we get some parallels to stories which occur in the Bible, and we can take the view that both Bible and *Jatakas* are influenced by a common store of Eastern folk-tales, handed down by oral tradition, or that the *Jatakas* have derived something from the Bible. Recent evidence tends to support the latter view. It is certain that the folk-tales of India travelled a long way, since traces of them crop up in Chaucer and Boccaccio. (The story of Isabella and the pot of basil has a distinctly Indian flavour about it. The basil or *tulasi* plant is a sacred object with Vaishnavites, who regard it as an emblem of the god himself.)

III. The *Abhidhamma*, which is long and difficult, and is full of what we might call philosophical theology. It can hardly be primitive, but is probably the product of the Buddhist community.

Other canons are in Sanskrit, and include:

- (i) Nepalese Mahayana texts.
- (ii) Central Asian texts, partly Mahayana and partly not.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

(iii) A Chinese canon, made by the authority of various Emperors. The originals of this latter are all in Sanskrit, translated into Chinese, with a few original Chinese works added.

(iv) A somewhat similar Tibetan canon.

There are also a number of separate books in various central Asiatic languages.

There is no limit to the Mahayana canon, and new works are even now added to it from time to time. As in the case of the Upanishads, the way of revelation or enlightenment is still open. The Mahayana literature is in fact copious and immense, and no Buddhist ever dreams of being able to study the whole of it, but the different groups base their teaching on a few selected documents. Of these the most famous are the *Diamond-cutter Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra*, and two others dealing with meditation as securing admission into the Paradise of the Pure Land of the West. There are also several lives of the Buddha, embellished with miraculous details. One Japanese sect, the Nichiren, is said to treat the *Lotus Sutra* with as much reverence as that with which any verbal inspirationist has ever treated the Christian scriptures. Bible influence seems strongest in the *Lotus*.

There is however, apart from this, no general theory of 'revelation' attached to the Buddhist documents. Though revered as sacred, they are treated as naturalistic human records. It is the enlightenment of Gautama which is the element of inspiration in them, and the text is in no way divinely guaranteed. This is no doubt due to the background of identity-mysticism which lies behind them. It needs a transcendent deity like the Allah of Islam to produce a verbally inerrant and completely authoritative sacred book.

The following passages are now given.

### (i) *Fragments from the (Fourth) Anguttara Nikaya*

Mrs Rhys Davids considers these primitive, and they show, according to her, Gautama's positive belief in a great Self immanent in the body, the realization, of which, as identical with the lesser phenomenal self, is, according to him, the goal of man's becoming. We can, if we like, compare this with Hegel's definition of religion

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as the knowledge attained by the finite nature of itself as Absolute Mind.

- (a) Here is a man who has made-to-become his actions,  
morals, mind, wisdom, who is not a less, but who is a  
Great Self.
- (b) Nowhere can any cover up his sin.  
The Self in thee, man, knows what's true or false.  
Indeed, my friend, thou scorn'st the noble Self,  
Thinking to hide the evil self in thee  
From Self who witnessed it.  
Thus he who has the Self  
As master, let him walk with heed.

#### (ii) *A passage from the Samyutta Nikaya*

Of the same kind as the last (i.e. metrical), in which sacrifice of a ritual kind is condemned.

I lay no wood, brahmin, for fires on altars.  
Only within burneth the fire I kindle.  
Ever my fire burns, ever tense and ardent.  
I, as an Arahant, work out the life that's holy.  
... the heart's the altar,  
The fire thereon, this is man's self, well-tamed.

#### (iii) *An early passage on judgement*

This seems to imply the carrying over into his thought by Gautama of the idea of a judgement by Yama, a Hindu deity of the underworld, who in the Upanishads is the equivalent for Death, personified as a *deva*.

Someone acts amiss in deed, word, and thought. When the body breaks up after dying, he rises up in a woeful way, warders haling him before the Yama as one who, unfilial,

without respect for the worthy and holy things, or for the head of the family, deserves punishment. Him the Yama admonishes: See here, man! Did you not see manifest among men our first... our second... our third messenger? – No, Sir. – Did you not see an aged man or woman, a sick man or woman, a woman or man dead? – I did see, Sir. – See here, man, to you ware and mindful did not this occur: I shall be even as they. Come, I will do the good in deed, word, and thought? – I did not, Sir, I will have been careless. – See here, man, according to your carelessness will they do to you. For lo, these deeds were done neither by mother, nor by father, not by brother, by sister, by friend or colleague or kinsman, but by you, yea, by you were these deeds done. It is you who now experience the results thereof.

(iv) *The famous Sutta of the Turning of the Wheel*

This is best given in full, except for certain unnecessary repetitions, from Mrs Rhys David's rather literal translation. It claims to be the sermon delivered by Gautama, after his Enlightenment, to his first five disciples in the deer-park at Benares.

These two ends, almsmen, are not to be followed by one-who-has-left-the-world. Which two? That which is clinging addiction to the will-to-welfare, low, pagan, of the average man, ignoble, not belonging to the Good, and that which is addiction to the tormenting of the self, ill, ignoble, not belonging to the Good. Now by the Wayfarer not having gone up to either of these ends, a middle course has been thoroughly understood, making vision, making knowledge, which conduces to calm after toil, to thorough knowledge, to understanding, to nirvana. And what is that middle course which has been thoroughly understood, etc. ...? Just this noble eight-fold way, namely, right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindful-

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ness, right concentration. This is that middle course, which, etc. ... nirvana.

But this now, almsmen, is 'the 'ill'-noble-truth: both birth and old age and disease and dying, and yoking with things not dear, and disyoking from things dear, and that he gets what he is not wanting, are 'ill': this too is 'ill': the five groups of fuel. But this now, almsmen, is the 'origin-of-ill'-noble-truth: that which is craving, rebecoming-ish, accompanied by pleasure and passion, finding delight here and there, namely, craving for will to sensuous welfare, craving for becoming, craving for prosperity. But this now, almsmen, is the 'ending-of-ill'-noble-truth: the fading out and ending of just that craving, giving up, surrender, release, not using. But now this, almsmen, is the course-going-to-'ending-of-ill'-noble-truth: just this noble eightfold way, namely, right view, etc. [*as in preceding*]. At this 'ill' noble truth, vision arose in me of things not heard before, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, Veda-wit arose, light arose. But that now this 'ill'-noble-truth must be completely known, having been completely known by me, vision arose in me, ... light arose. [Again] at this 'origin-of-ill'-noble-truth vision arose in me of things not heard before ... light arose. But that now this 'origin-of-ill'-noble-truth must be got rid of, having been got rid of by me, vision arose in me ... light arose. But that now this 'ending-of-ill'-noble-truth must be realized by me, having been realized by me, vision of ... light arose. [Again] at this 'course-going-to-ending-of-ill'-noble-truth vision arose in me ... light arose. But that now this 'course-going-to-ending-of-ill'-noble-truth must be made to become, having been by me made to become, vision arose in me ... light arose. Now so long, almsmen, as for me concerning these four noble truths knowledge and insight as it really had come to be, thus thrice rehearsed, twelvefold-schemed, was not made clearer, so long I admitted I was not thoroughly awakened to supreme understanding as



to the world with devas, with demons, with brahma-devas, as to [this] generation of recluses and brahmans, with devas and men. But when once that knowledge and insight had become clear in the way aforesaid, then I admitted I was thoroughly awakened to supreme understanding concerning the world ... concerning [this] generation of recluses and brahmans with devas and men. But then knowledge and vision in me arose thus: unshakeable [is] for me release of purpose! This is the last birth! There is now no more re-becoming.

(v) *The Diamond-cutter Sutra (Mahayana)*

*The Transcendent Wisdom*

A good example of what may be called 'identity-mysticism'. It may be compared with the non-duality teaching of Sankara, who, although a Hindu, was sometimes accused of being a crypto-Buddhist. The title presumably means 'sharp and penetrating'. Cf. Hebrews iv. 12. The sentiments here are almost Theravada.

Thus have I heard concerning our Lord Buddha:

Upon a memorable occasion, the Lord Buddha sojourned in the kingdom of Sravasti, lodging in the grove of Jeta, a park within the imperial domain, which Jeta, the heir-apparent, bestowed upon Sutana, a benevolent minister of state, renowned for his charities and benefactions.

With the Lord Buddha, there were assembled together twelve hundred and fifty mendicant disciples, all of whom had attained to eminent degrees of spiritual wisdom.

Upon that occasion, the venerable Subhuti occupied a place in the midst of the assembly. Rising from his seat, with cloak arranged in such manner that his right shoulder was disclosed, Subhuti knelt upon his right knee, then pressing together the palms of his hands, he respectfully raised them towards Lord Buddha, saying: 'Thou art of transcendent wisdom, honoured

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of the worlds! With wonderful solicitude, thou dost preserve in the faith, and instruct in the law, this illustrious assembly of enlightened disciples. Honoured of the worlds! if a good disciple, whether man or woman, seeks to obtain supreme spiritual wisdom, what immutable law shall sustain the mind of that disciple, and bring into subjection every inordinate desire?’

The Lord Buddha replied to Subhuti, saying: ‘Truly a most excellent theme! As you affirmed, I preserve in the faith, and instruct in the law, this illustrious assembly of enlightened disciples. Attend diligently unto me, and I shall enunciate a law whereby the mind of a good disciple, whether man or woman, seeking to obtain supreme spiritual wisdom, shall be adequately sustained, and enabled to bring into subjection every inordinate desire.’ Subhuti was gratified, and signified glad consent. Thereupon the Lord Buddha, with majesty of person, and perfect articulation, proceeded to deliver the text of this scripture, saying:

‘By this wisdom shall enlightened disciples be enabled to bring into subjection every inordinate desire! Every species of life, whether hatched in the egg, formed in the womb, evolved from spawn, produced by metamorphosis, with or without form or intelligence, possessing or devoid of natural instinct – from these changeful conditions of being, I command you to seek deliverance, in the transcendental concept of Nirvana. Thus, you shall be delivered from an immeasurable, innumerable, and illimitable world of sentient life; but, in reality, there is no world of sentient life from which to seek deliverance. And why? Because in the minds of enlightened disciples, there have ceased to exist such arbitrary concepts of phenomena as an entity, a being, a living being, or a personality.

‘Moreover, Subhuti, an enlightened disciple ought to act spontaneously in the exercise of charity, uninfluenced by

sensuous phenomena such as sound, odour, taste, touch, or law. Subhuti, it is imperative that an enlightened disciple, in the exercise of charity, should act independently of phenomena. And why? Because, acting without regard to illusive forms of phenomena, he will realize in the exercise of charity a merit inestimable and immeasurable.

'Subhuti, what think you? Is it possible to estimate the distance comprising the illimitable universe of space?' Subhuti replied, saying: 'Honoured of the worlds! It is impossible to estimate the distance comprising the illimitable universe of space.' The Lord Buddha thereupon discoursed, saying: 'It is equally impossible to estimate the merit of an enlightened disciple, who discharges the exercise of charity, unperturbed by the seductive influences of phenomena. Subhuti, the mind of an enlightened disciple ought thus to be indoctrinated.'

The Lord Buddha interrogated Subhuti, saying: 'What think you? Is it possible that by means of his physical body, the Lord Buddha may be clearly perceived?' Subhuti replied, saying: 'No, Honoured of the worlds! It is impossible that by means of his physical body, the Lord Buddha may be clearly perceived. And why? Because what the Lord Buddha referred to as a physical body is in reality not merely a physical body.' Thereupon the Lord Buddha addressed Subhuti, saying: 'Every form or quality of phenomena is transient and illusive. When the mind realizes that the phenomena of life are not real phenomena, the Lord Buddha may then be clearly perceived.'

Subhuti inquired of the Lord Buddha, saying: 'Honoured of the worlds! In future ages, when this scripture is proclaimed, amongst those beings destined to hear, shall any conceive within their minds a sincere, unmingled faith?'

The Lord Buddha replied to Subhuti, saying: 'Have no such apprehensive thought! Even at the remote period of five centuries subsequent to the Nirvana of the Lord Buddha,

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there will be many disciples observing the monastic vows, and assiduously devoted to good works. These, hearing this scripture proclaimed, will believe in its immutability, and similarly conceive within their minds a pure, unmingled faith. Besides, it is important to realize that faith thus conceived is not exclusively in virtue of the insular thought of any particular Buddha, but because of its affiliation with the concrete thoughts of myriad Buddhas, throughout infinite ages. Therefore, amongst the beings destined to hear this scripture proclaimed, by momentary reflection, will intuitively conceive a pure and holy faith.'

The Lord Buddha addressed Subhuti, saying: 'What think you? Has the Lord Buddha really attained to supreme spiritual wisdom? Or has he a system of doctrine which can be specifically formulated?'

Subhuti replied, saying: 'As I understand the meaning of the Lord Buddha's discourse, he has no system of doctrine which can be specifically formulated; nor can the Lord Buddha express, in explicit terms, a form of knowledge which can be described as supreme spiritual wisdom. And why? Because what the Lord Buddha adumbrated in terms of the law is transcendental and inexpressible. Being a purely spiritual concept, it is neither consonant with law, nor synonymous with anything apart from the law. Thus is exemplified the manner by which wise disciples and holy Buddhas, regarding intuition as the law of their minds, severally attained to different planes of spiritual wisdom.'

The Lord Buddha addressed Subhuti, saying: 'What think you? If a benevolent person bestowed as alms an abundance of the seven treasures sufficient to fill the universe, would there accrue to that person a considerable merit?'

Subhuti replied, saying: 'A very considerable merit, honoured of the worlds! And why? Because what is referred to does not partake of the nature of ordinary merit, and in this

sense the Lord Buddha made mention of a "considerable" merit'.

The Lord Buddha rejoined, saying: 'If a disciple adhered with implicit faith to a stanza of this scripture, and diligently explained it to others, the intrinsic merit of that disciple would be relatively greater. And why? Because, Subhuti, the holy Buddhas, and the law by which they attained to supreme spiritual wisdom, severally owe their inception to the truth of this sacred scripture. Subhuti, what is ordinarily termed the Buddhist law is not really a law attributive to Buddha.'

The Lord Buddha inquired of Subhuti, saying: 'What think you? May a Srotapatti (that is, one who has entered the stream which bears on to Nirvana) thus moralize within himself, "I have obtained the fruits commensurate with the merit of a Srotapatti"?' Subhuti replied, saying: 'No, honoured of the worlds! And why? Because Srotapatti is simply a descriptive term signifying "having entered the stream". A disciple who avoids the seductive phenomena of form, sound, odour, taste, touch, and law, is named a Srotapatti.'

The Lord Buddha yet again inquired of Subhuti, saying: 'What think you? May an Arhat (having attained to absolute quiescence of mind) thus meditate within himself, "I have obtained the condition of an Arhat!"?' Subhuti replied, saying: 'No! honoured of the worlds! And why? Because there is not in reality a condition synonymous with the term Arhat. Honoured of the worlds! if an Arhat thus meditates within himself, "I have obtained the condition of an Arhat", there would be obvious recurrence of such arbitrary concepts as an entity, a being, a living being, and a personality.'

Upon that occasion, Subhuti inquired of the Lord Buddha, saying: 'Honoured of the worlds! by what name shall this scripture be known, that we may regard it with reverence?' The Lord Buddha replied, saying: 'Subhuti, this scripture

shall be known as The Diamond-cutter Sutra, "The Transcendent Wisdom", by means of which we reach "The Other Shore". By this name you shall reverently regard it. And why? Subhuti, what the Lord Buddha declared as "transcendent wisdom" by means of which we reach "the other shore" is not essentially "transcendent wisdom" – in its essence it transcends all wisdom.'

The Lord Buddha addressed Subhuti, saying: 'What think you? You disciples, do not affirm that the Lord Buddha reflects thus within himself, "I bring salvation to every living being." Subhuti, entertain no such delusive thought! And why? Because in reality there are no living beings to whom the Lord Buddha can bring salvation. If there were living beings to whom the Lord Buddha could bring salvation, the Lord Buddha would necessarily assume the reality of such arbitrary concepts as an entity, a being, a living being, and a personality. Subhuti, what the Lord Buddha adverted to as an entity is not in reality an entity; it is only understood to be an entity, and believed in as such, by the common, uneducated people. Subhuti, what are ordinarily referred to as the "common, uneducated people", these the Lord Buddha declared to be not merely "common, uneducated people".'

The Lord Buddha addressed Subhuti, saying: 'Can the Lord Buddha be perceived by means of his thirty-two bodily distinctions?' Subhuti replied, saying: 'Even so, the Lord Buddha can be perceived by means of his thirty-two bodily distinctions.'

The Lord Buddha, continuing, said unto Subhuti: 'If by means of his thirty-two bodily distinctions it were possible to perceive the Lord Buddha, then the Lord Buddha would merely resemble one of the great wheel-turning kings.'

Subhuti thereupon addressed the Lord Buddha, saying: 'Honoured of the worlds! According as I am able to interpret the Lord Buddha's instruction, it is improbable that the Lord

Buddha may be perceived by means of his thirty-two bodily distinctions.'

Thereafter, the 'Honoured of the Worlds' delivered this sublime Gatha:

'I am not to be perceived by means of any visible form,  
Nor sought after by means of any audible sound;  
Whosoever walks in the way of iniquity  
Cannot perceive the blessedness of the Lord Buddha.'

The Lord Buddha said unto Subhuti: 'If you think thus within yourself, "The Lord Buddha did not, by means of his perfect bodily distinctions, obtain supreme spiritual wisdom", Subhuti, have no such deceptive thought! Or if you think thus within yourself, "In obtaining supreme spiritual wisdom, the Lord Buddha declared the abrogation of every law", Subhuti, have no such delusive thought! And why? Because those disciples who obtain supreme spiritual wisdom, neither affirm the abrogation of any law, nor the destruction of any distinctive quality of phenomena.'

The Lord Buddha thereupon declared unto Subhuti, 'Belief in the unity or eternity of matter is incomprehensible; and only common, wordly-minded people, for purely materialistic reasons, covet this hypothesis.'

The Lord Buddha addressed Subhuti, saying: 'If a disciple, having immeasurable spheres filled with the seven treasures, bestowed these in the exercise of charity; and if a disciple, whether man or woman, having aspired to supreme spiritual wisdom, selected from this scripture a stanza comprising four lines, then rigorously observed it, studied it, and diligently explained it to others; the cumulative merit of such a disciple would be relatively greater than that of the other.'

'In what attitude of mind should it be diligently explained to others? Not assuming the permanency or the reality of earthly phenomena, but in the conscious blessedness of a mind

at perfect rest. And why? Because the phenomena of life may be likened unto a dream, a phantasm, a bubble, a shadow, the glistening dew, or lightning flash, and thus they ought to be contemplated.'

When the Lord Buddha concluded his enunciation of this scripture, the venerable Subhuti, the monks, nuns, lay-brethren, and sisters, all mortals, and the whole realm of spiritual beings, rejoiced exceedingly, and consecrated to its practice, they received it and departed.

(vi) *Extract from the Lotus Sutra (Mahayana)*

I am the Tathagata, O ye gods and men! the Arhat, the perfectly enlightened one; having reached the shore myself, I carry others to the shore; being free, I make free; being comforted, I comfort; being perfectly at rest, I lead others to rest. By my perfect wisdom I know both this world and the next, such as they really are. I am all-knowing, all-seeing. Come to me, ye gods and men! hear the law. I am he who indicates the path; who shows the path, as knowing the path, being acquainted with the path.

I shall refresh all beings whose bodies are withered, who are clogged the triple world. I shall bring to felicity those that are pining away with toils, give them pleasures and final rest.

Hearken to me, ye hosts of gods and men; approach to behold me: I am the Tathagata, the Lord, who has no superior, who appears in this world to save. To thousands of kotis of living beings I preach a pure and most bright law that has but one scope, to wit, deliverance and rest.

I preach with ever the same voice, constantly taking enlightenment as my text. For this is equal for all; no partiality is in it, neither hatred nor affection. I am inexorable, bear no love nor hatred towards anyone, and proclaim the law to all creatures without distinction, to the one as well as the other.



I re-create the whole world like a cloud shedding its water without distinction; I have the same feelings for respectable people as for the low; for moral persons as for the immoral; for the depraved as for those who observe the rules of good conduct; for those who hold sectarian views and unsound tenets as for those whose views are sound and correct. I preach the law to the inferior in mental culture as well as to persons of superior understanding and extraordinary faculties; inaccessible to weariness, I spread in season the rain of the law.

(vii) *Two Jataka passages from the Life of the Buddha*

These, although in the Pali canon, contain Mahayana notions.

(a) *The Presentation of the Child to an Ascetic* (cf. with Luke ii. 22-32)

On this same day the happy and delighted hosts of the heaven of the thirty-three held a celebration, waving their cloaks and giving other signs of joy, because to king Suddhodana in Kapilavatthu had been born a son who should sit at the foot of the Bo-tree, and become a Buddha.

Now it came to pass at that time that an ascetic named Kaladevala, who was an intimate friend of king Suddhodana, and practised in the eight stages of meditation, went, after his daily meal, to the heaven of the thirty-three to take his noon-day rest. And as he was sitting there resting, he noticed these gods, and said,

'Why do you frolic so joyously? Let me too know the reason.'

'Sir,' replied the gods, 'it is because a son has been born to king Suddhodana, who shall sit at the foot of the Bo-tree, and become a Buddha, and cause the wheel of the doctrine to roll; in him we shall be permitted to behold the infinite and masterful ease of a Buddha, and shall hear the doctrine.'

On hearing this, the ascetic descended from the world of

the gods in haste, and entered the dwelling of the king; and having seated himself on the seat assigned to him, he said,

'Great king, I hear that a son has been born to you. I would see him.'

Then the king had the prince magnificently dressed, and brought in, and carried up to do reverence to the ascetic. But the feet of the future Buddha turned and planted themselves in the matted locks of the ascetic. For in that birth there was no one worthy of the future Buddha's reverence; and if these ignorant people had succeeded in causing the future Buddha to bow, the head of the ascetic would have split in seven pieces.

'It is not meet that I compass my own death,' thought the ascetic, and rose from his seat, and with joined hands did reverence to the future Buddha. And when the king had seen this wonder, he also did reverence to his son.

Then said the king, 'What shall my son see to make him retire from the world?'

'The four signs.'

'What four?'

'A decrepit old man, a diseased man, a dead man, and a monk.'

'From this time forth,' said the king, 'Let no such persons be allowed to come near my son. It will never do for my son to become a Buddha. What I would wish to see is my son exercising sovereign rule and authority over the four great continents and the two thousand attendant isles, and walking through the heavens surrounded by a retinue thirty-six leagues in circumference.' And when he had so spoken he placed guards for a distance of a quarter of a league in each of the four directions, in order that none of these four kinds of men might come within sight of his son.

(b) *The Temptations of Gautama by the Power of Evil*

Then Mara called to mind his own army, wishing to work the overthrow of the Sakya saint; and his followers swarmed round, wearing different forms and carrying arrows, trees, darts, clubs, and swords in their hands; having the faces of boars, fishes, horses, asses, and camels, of tigers, bears, lions, and elephants – one-eyed, many-faced, three-headed – with protuberant bellies and speckled bellies; blended with goats, with knees swollen like pots, armed with tusks and with claws, carrying headless trunks in their hands, and assuming many forms, with half-mutilated faces, and with monstrous mouths; copper-red, covered with red spots, bearing clubs in their hands, with yellow or smoke-coloured hair, with wreaths dangling down, with long pendulous ears like elephants, clothed in leather or wearing no clothes at all; having half their faces white or half their bodies green – red and smoke-coloured, yellow and black – with arms reaching out longer than a serpent, and with girdles jingling with rattling bells; with dishevelled hair, or with topknots, or half-bald, with rope-garments or with head-dress all in confusion – with triumphant faces or frowning faces – wasting the strength or fascinating the mind.

## NOTE ON BUDDHIST SERMONS

Hinduism has no institution of actual sermons delivered to large congregations, unless we include the recitation of the *Ramayana* or of the *Puranas* with spoken comments, but only of discourses addressed to (at the most) a small group of *chelas* or disciples, and as often as not to one *chela* at a time. The situation is rather different when we approach Buddhism. Here we find the sermon almost from the first a well-developed institution, and it is probable that this was also the case with Jainism. (Jain sermons to-day are either metaphysical instructions or ethical exhortations, but they seem to attract fairly large audiences). Certainly the Buddha, although he may have begun by

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speaking to only a few intimate acquaintances, was before long preaching to larger gatherings, and sometimes even to crowds, and the Tripitaka contains records of memorized and orally transmitted discourses, usually set within a stereotyped and fairly uniform framework, which claim to be the deliverances of Gautama himself. Thus we find on one of the Vinaya texts, i.e. *The Discourse of Turning the Dhamma Wheel*: 'What is that middle path, O monks, avoiding the two extremes, discovered by the Tathagata – that path which leads to peace of mind ... to full enlightenment, to Nirvana? – Truly it is the noble eight-fold path' (which includes, of course, right *jhana* or contemplation, and right morality). In the *Dhammapada* (v. 380) we read: 'The Great Self is the end or goal of the self', which of course is good Upanishadic language, for cf. the *Maitri Upanishad*, 6.8: 'This Self assuredly is Lord, is Becoming. ... This assuredly one should desire to know', where the Self is the One Atman, the Unconditioned Absolute, into which the little self is to be absorbed by *vidya* or knowledge. There is no message from a personal and Transcendent Revealer, but simply the welling up of an innermost perception: 'Vision arose in me, light arose.' Gautama must himself have assumed the accepted background of all Upanishadic theology, the Pure and Unconditioned Being of the Indefinable Absolute, concerning which nothing positive can be said without falling into error. Probably one of the two senses in which the word Nirvana or Nibbana is used implies this. The number of alleged sermons of this type or on this theme is very considerable (probably several hundred), and it is clear that none of them is in the least concerned with communion with a Personal God, but their sentiments bring us remarkably close to the identity-mysticism of some Christians. They imply that in that state of bliss in which subject and object are merged in one, there is no *Ich* and *Du*, and therefore no *Du* for the *Ich* to describe, while the Absolute in which both *Ich* and *Du* discover their final unity is beyond definition, so that the only wise thing is to remain silent about It. Yet however lofty and refined may have been Gautama's mysticism, and however much it may seem possible to interpret it as being, apart from its special and peculiar Eastern idiom, no more atheistic than the identity-mysticism of St Catherine of Genoa, in effect it is only the apotheosis of a man-centred religion, for these sermons are aimed

primarily not at the glory of God but at the relief of human suffering. Gautama, for all his penetrating mystical intelligence, is practical to a degree, and it is just this which makes it so easy for the Buddhist monk who has received a modern education to appear on the twentieth-century stage as only a variant species of the contemporary humanist. Modern Buddhist sermons, as I have reason to know, are simply ethical exhortations, similar to some Christian discourses on the importance of being good, with all reference to man's incapacity and his need of the grace of God omitted. No doubt this is the natural and inevitable trend of Hinayana preaching. On the other hand, Dr Embree's accounts of Mahayana discourses in Japan leave the impression that Sukhavati Buddhism, with its insistence on the merits of Amida and on faith in Amida, as well as with its doctrine of the cosmic Buddha-Spirit who appears spatio-temporally from time to time, produces sermons not unlike those of Evangelical Christendom, by which it may even have been influenced.

Embree says that sermons and talks form part of the regular Mahayana Buddhist life of Suze,\* the Japanese village which he studied intensively, and he prints a very interesting sermon preached in August 1936 by the Shinshu monk of Fukada, on the occasion of a memorial service for a boy who had been drowned. Assuming that the translation is a correct one, it is surprising what a curious resemblance it bears to a Protestant Evangelical discourse. Embree adds that most Japanese are connected with both Shinto and Buddhism, but for different reasons. There is no regular weekly or monthly attendance at either the shrines or the temples of Shinto, nor is there any individual or congregational communion with the gods. For all this the priests represent the people, saying on their behalf the various prayers, and performing for them the various rituals. Buddhism is different, in being much more congregational.

The following extract will show how far from the standard conception of Buddhism as an atheistic religion, with no belief in the soul, is some (at any rate) of the modern Mahayana Buddhism. Embree records the Shinshu priest as saying in the course of his funeral sermon:

\* *Suze Mura, a Study of Japanese Village Life* (London, Routledge).

We neglect our spiritual life, leading a selfish life. The final thing to depend on however is our soul. ... It is only the soul that goes with us into the next world. ... It is however too late to know of this on our deathbed. Those who know that they enter the land of purity as soon as they die are the happiest people in the world. ... it is only when we give up all confidence in ourselves, and truly see after something to depend upon, that we hear the voice of Nyorai [another name for Amida, a Bodhisattva or incarnation of the Buddha]. Nyorai never forsakes those who ask for help sincerely. Nyorai lives within ourselves. His existence is only suppressed by our worldly thought – or money, or reputation, or a grudge. Once however we meet with difficulties and are conscious how poor our power is, how all things around us are inconstant, how we are altogether made of sins, we are thrown into the sorrow of entire solitude. It is at this moment that we are allowed to hear Nyorai's voice. Then a life with Nyorai as the centre will begin. It will be quite different from the former life with the ego as the centre. ... The true belief will be that in which you put everything in the hands of Nyorai.

(Dr Embree adds that both the sermon taken down by the scribe and afterwards translated, and the three sermons which follow it, taken from the *Kiwo Dowa*, a volume of homilies compiled by a monk of the Shingaku sect, are quite typical.)

Professor Pratt has a pleasantly vivid description of a Hinayana service which he attended in a temple at Bangkok.\* He writes as follows:

'Preaching services ... are held in the wats (or temples) four times a month.... I shall describe one which I attended in the wat Bencham-bopit, which I have reason to believe is very typical. About a third of the way from the altar to the door was the preacher's throne. In front of it, as I entered, were about twenty monks seated on mats on the floor, while behind the throne or pulpit sat the congregation, also on

\* *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, Chap. IX.

mats. Immediately behind the pulpit was a rack with the candles offered by the people as they entered, also two large vases with lotus buds, and several fruit dishes containing offerings of pan and betel. The service had not begun when I arrived, and the congregation – about forty-five in number – were having a pleasant social time, chatting, chewing betel, drinking tea, one or two of the men smoking, and some of them quietly praying. Men and women were present (I confess it was hard to tell which was which), as well as a few children. Each newcomer took off his shoes on entering, got down on hands and knees, and crawled to his mat, bundle in hand (for all come pretty well armed), and on reaching his place proceeded to unpack and arrange his possessions. First the candles had to be handed up through the audience to the man nearest the candle-rack, and by him lighted and put in place. Then the betel box, spittoon, and perhaps teapot and tea cup must be conveniently located near the mat. These things being attended to, the newcomer would put his hands together, extend them towards the Buddha, and make a little silent prayer. The service began with chanting by the monks. ... The chanting was in unison on a single low note, and the monks kept the note admirably. It was varied with responses between the leader and the body of the monks, but always in a low and rather fine monotone. No gong or other instrument was used. The chanting was interspersed with bowing, and at a certain recognized phrase the audience also bowed deeply, touching their heads to the floor, and then followed chanting with greater attention and reverence than before.... All the members of the congregation put their hands together in the attitude of prayer, and followed the chanting of the monks with silent but moving lips. Plainly they knew the verses by heart, and were very serious and reverent in reciting them. This sacred chant continued for some ten or fifteen minutes, and then one of the monks came forward and seated himself, cross-legged, in the preacher's throne, facing the congregation, but at first holding before his face a small screen of fan, while he led in a new responsive chant.

'At the close of the responses the preacher put aside his screen and took up a manuscript case, drawing out of it a long palm-leaf manuscript, from which, after intoning a few sentences, he proceeded to read. He read in a monotone but slowly and distinctly, and so far as

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I could see with no interpretations thrown in. The people were extremely attentive, nearly all holding their hands in the praying position, some with arms and heads touching the floor. The reading lasted some twenty minutes. The preacher then left the pulpit, the monks chanted two or three sentences, everybody bowed with heads touching the floor, the monks arose and filed out, and the congregation drank tea.'

Pratt gives the following short sermon which he heard delivered in Bangkok to a small congregation of not more than thirty people, and which was translated for him. It must however be stated that the interpreter was a convert from Buddhism to Christianity, and that his rendering may conceivably have been affected by this change of allegiance.

'The use of Buddha to the world is to make people cease to be selfish and jealous. Also Buddha teaches us that death is not the end, but that man is immortal, that only the body dies but the soul lives on. We shall have everlasting life in Nibban. We shall have eternal happiness there. It is happiness that cannot be lost. But Buddha said, If you are to be happy in Nibban you must obey the Teaching and do good. The man who really puts his heart into his prayer will get a blessing from it. The Buddha hears and knows our prayers, and is doing his best to help us.'

Lord Redesdale, at the time when he was a secretary to the British Legation in Tokyo, was fortunate enough to be able to hear a sermon preached in a temple of the Nichiren sect, and as he took with him on this occasion an artist and a scribe, he was enabled to preserve a record not only of what the congregation looked like and how it behaved, but also of the substance of the discourse. I give herewith an abridgement of what he says, in the final chapters of his *Tales of Old Japan*.

The congregation of the Nichiren temple was apparently very much like that seen in the Siamese temple by Professor Pratt, and included some children who, says Lord Redesdale, were perfect little models of decorum and devoutness. It occupied itself in much the same way while waiting for the sermon to begin, smoking, chatting, and drinking tea. The sermon hall, corresponding to the nave of a Christian church, opened out on to a charming garden, and adjoining it was a small chapel, in which monks were intoning what Redesdale



calls a Buddhist mass, though this would seem to have been, if Pratt is correct, merely the chanting of sutras – worship in speech. At the end of the chanting an old monk, in gorgeous red and white robes, came out preceded by an acolyte, who carried the sacred volume of the *Lotus Sutra*, highly revered by the Nichiren sect, on a tray covered in scarlet and gold brocade. The monk bowed to a sacred picture, and sat down at a table, on which was a bell, which he struck, apparently to call the attention of some divine Being to the worship about to be offered. He then burnt some incense, and read a passage from the sacred volume. After this the congregation made its offerings of money, and the monk drank tea. Finally he began his sermon, which was punctuated at intervals by cries of *nammiyo* from the congregation. This ejaculation, which corresponds to the cry of *Hallelujah* on the part of a pious Salvationist, is the opening word of a short prayer, *Namu miyo ho ren go kiyo*, which the congregation had been chanting at intervals before the entry of the monk, and the whole of the prayer is said to be a commendation of one's self to the care of the quasi-divine beings who are addressed. These may once have been actual deities, but they are now respectable Buddhist saints or Bodhisattvas. The monk began: 'It is a matter of profound satisfaction to me to see so many gentlemen and ladies gathered together this day in the fidelity of their hearts to do honour to the feast of Kishimojin' (apparently a female saint of Bodhisattva). He then went on to say how much this piety must please the saint, who is ever striving to find some means of delivering mankind from the tortures of desire which oppress them. He next spent some time dwelling upon the corruption wrought by false desires in human life, and showing how pitiful and foolish a thing it is to concentrate one's wishes upon the evanescent and transitory: 'These lusts and desires agitate our hearts: if we are free from these desires, our hearts will be bright and pure. There is nothing save the teaching of Buddha which can ensure us this freedom. Following the commands of Buddha, and delivered by him from all our desires, we may pass our lives in peace and happiness.' He then went on to explain that this state of salvation need not be something in the future, but could be attained here and now: 'We need not be born again into another world after death in order to reach it. He who lays aside his carnal lust and affections, at once and of a certainty

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becomes equal to Buddha. When we recite the prayer *Namu miyo ho ren go kiyo* we are praying to enter this state of peace and happiness, and there will then be no difference between our state and that of Buddha and Nichiren.' The service ended as it had begun, by prayer in chorus, during which the old monk retired, preceded by his acolyte.

Lord Redesdale adds that although sermons are thus delivered as part of a service on special days, they are more frequently preached in courses occupying about a fortnight, during which two are delivered each day, frequently by itinerant monks. A kind of lay-clerk or verger was on duty all the time in the hall, leading the prayers, recording the names of the congregation, and receiving their contributions to the expenses of the temple.

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### CHINESE WISDOM

The Chinese being a practical people, their sages did not produce literature for the most part of the kind which we get in the Upanishads. The nearest they reach to it is in the *Tao-te-King*, and works associated with Taoism.

The extracts given below are first from the classics as edited in the spirit of Confucius, if not by the man himself: (i) two cosmological passages from the *Yih-King*; (ii) a historical passage from the *Shu-King*; (iii) a passage on deportment from the *Li-Ki*; (iv) a short extract from the *Chun Tsiu*, showing how Confucius by a skilful altering of words edited an older chronicle, much in the same way as that in which the prophetic compilers of the Hebrews edited their national records, so as to indicate which actions on the part of rulers were in accordance with the divine moral law, and which were not. Next we shall have (v) a few passages from the sayings attributed to Confucius himself, and following these some extracts from (vi) Mo-ti and (vii) Mencius; (viii) is a passage from a later Confucian classic, the *Chung Yung*, or Doctrine of the Mean. (ix) Finally come a few of the more striking and typical passages in the *Tao-te-King* and an attempt at a synthesis by a neo-Confucian of the twelfth century A.D.,

Chu Hsi, who has been sometimes called the St Thomas Aquinas of China. For fuller extracts readers must be referred to E. R. Hughes' source-book on Chinese philosophy, mentioned earlier.

(i) *From the Yih-King*

This curious text is based on a number of ideograms made up of straight lines, which are said to symbolize moral, spiritual, and political ideas. It looks as though it might have been used primarily for purposes of divination, and is at least as old as 1200 B. C., but a number of appendices added to it are attributed to Confucius, and show how someone in his age at any rate edited it so as to try to draw out its meaning.

(a) *From Appendix IV, ch. 6: The marks of the ideal man, or chün-tzu*

Some will see in this passage ideas which resemble those of the Greek Stoics, who taught: 'live in harmony with Nature'. But it is as well to remember that Confucius is earlier than the earliest Stoic.

The great man is he who is in harmony, in his attributes, with heaven and earth; in his brightness, with the sun and moon; in his orderly procedure, with the four seasons; and in his relation to what is fortunate and what is calamitous, in harmony with the spirit-like operations [of Providence]. He may precede Heaven, and Heaven will not act in opposition to him; he may follow Heaven, but will act [only] as Heaven at the time would do. If Heaven will not act in opposition to him, how much less will men! how much less will the spirit-like operation [of Providence]!

(b) *From Appendix V: A piece of cosmological theorizing*

Based on some of the trigrams. The word 'God' in this passage is a translation of the ideogram pronounced *Shang-Ti*, and Legge in a preface has a note defending this translation.

God comes forth in Kan [to His producing work]. He brings [His processes] into full and equal action in Sun; they are manifested to one another in Li; the greatest service is done

for Him in Khwan; He rejoices in Tui; He struggles in Khien; He is comforted and enters into rest in Khân; and He completes [the work of the year] in Kan.

All things are made to issue forth in Kan, which is placed at the east. [The processes of production] are brought into full and equal action in Sun, which is placed at the south-east. The being brought into full and equal action refers to the purity and equal arrangement of all things. Lî gives the idea of brightness. All things are now made manifest in one another. It is the trigram of the south. The sages turn their faces to the south when they give audience to all under the sky, administering government towards the region of brightness; – the idea in this procedure was taken from this. Khwan denotes the earth [and is placed at the south-west]. All things receive from it their fullest nourishment, and hence it is said, 'The greatest service is done for Him in Khwan.' Tui corresponds [to the west and] to the autumn – the season in which all things rejoice. Hence it is said, 'He rejoices in Tui.' He struggles in Khien, which is the trigram of the north-west. The idea is that there the inactive and active conditions beat against each other. Khân denotes water. It is the trigram of the exact north – the trigram of comfort and rest, what all things are tending to. Hence it is said, 'He is comforted and enters into rest in Khân.' Kan is the trigram of the north-east. In it all things bring to a full end the issues of the past [year], and prepare the commencement of the next. Hence it is said, 'He completes [the work of the year] in Kan.'

(ii) *A passage from the Shu-King, or Book of Records*

A king addresses his feudal allies. He is about to undertake what he feels is a just war, and this is what he says about it.

In the spring of the thirteenth year there was a great assembly of Mâng-king. The king said, 'Ah! ye hereditary rulers of

my friendly states, and all ye my officers, managers of my affairs, hearken clearly to my declaration.

'Heaven and earth is the parent of all creatures: and of all creatures man is the most highly endowed. The sincerely intelligent [among men] becomes the great sovereign and the great sovereign is the parent of the people. But now, Shâu, the king of Shang, does not reverence Heaven above, and inflicts calamities on the people below. Abandoned to drunkenness and reckless in lust, he has dared to exercise cruel oppression. He has extended the punishment of offenders to all their relatives. He has put men into offices on the hereditary principle. He has made it his pursuit to have palaces, towers, pavilions, embankments, ponds, and all other extravagances, to the most painful injury of you, the myriads of the people. He has burned and roasted the loyal and good. He has ripped up pregnant women. Great Heaven was moved with indignation, and charged my deceased father Wan to display its terrors; but [he died] before the work was completed.

'On this account I, Fâ, the little child, have by means of you, the hereditary rulers of my friendly states, contemplated the government of Shang; but Shâu has no repentant heart. He sits squatting on his heels, not serving God nor the spirits of heaven and earth, neglecting also the temple of his ancestors, and not sacrificing in it. The victims and the vessels of millet all become the prey of wicked robbers, and still he says, "The people are mine: the [heavenly] appointment is mine", never trying to correct his contemptuous mind.

'Heaven, for the help of the inferior people, made for them rulers, and made for them instructors, that they might be able to be aiding to God, and secure the tranquillity of the four quarters [of the kingdom]. In regard to who are criminals and who are not, how dare I give any allowance to my own wishes?

'"Where the strength is the same, measure the virtue of

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the parties; where virtue is the same, measure their righteousness." Shâu has hundreds of thousands and myriads of officers, but they have hundreds of thousands and myriads of minds; I have [but] three thousand officers, but they have one mind. The iniquity of Shang is full. Heaven gives command to destroy it. If I did not obey Heaven, my iniquity would be as great.

'I, the little child, early and late am filled with apprehensions. I have received the command of my deceased father Wan; I have offered special sacrifice to God; I have performed the due services to the great earth; and I lead the multitude of you to execute the punishment appointed by Heaven. Heaven compassionates the people. What the people desire, Heaven will be found to give effect to. Do you aid me, the one man, to cleanse for ever [all within] the four seas. Now is the time! — It should not be lost.'

This speech has a curiously modern ring. Yet it is possible that it dates from a thousand years before Christ.

#### (iii) *From the Li-Ki*

This work is a kind of Chinese Leviticus, and is concerned mainly with ceremonial and etiquette, especially in relation to the *Shen*, which is the Chinese equivalent for *numina*. It contains also however passages on deportment, one of which is given here, filial piety being regarded as a religious duty. It also shows signs of Confucian editing, especially in the matter of sacrifice, where it says that the disposition of the sacrificer is more important than the ritual itself.

Sons, in serving their parents, on the first crowing of the cock, should all wash their hands and rinse their mouths, comb their hair, draw over it the covering of silk, fix this with the hair-pin, bind the hair at the roots with the fillet, brush the dust from that which is left free, and then put on

their caps, leaving the ends of the strings hanging down. They should then put on their squarely made black jackets, knee-covers, and girdles, fixing in the last their tablets. From the left and right of the girdle they should hang their articles for us: — on the left side, the duster and handkerchief, the knife and whetstone, the small spike, and the metal speculum for getting fire from the sun; on the right, the archer's thimble for the thumb and the armlet, the tube for writing instruments, the knife-case, the larger spike, and the borer for getting fire from wood. They should put on their leggings, and adjust their shoe-strings.

[Sons'] wives should serve their parents-in-law as they served their own. At the first crowing of the cock, they should wash their hands, and rinse their mouths, comb their hair, draw over it the covering of silk, fix this with the hair-pin, and tie the hair at the roots with the fillet. They should then put on the jacket, and over it the sash. On the left side they should hand the duster and handkerchief, the knife and whetstone, the small spike, and the metal speculum to get fire with, all bestowed in the satchel, the great spike, and the borer to get fire with from wood. They will also fasten on their necklaces, and adjust their shoe-strings.

Thus dressed, they should go to their parents and parents-in-law. On getting to where they are, with bated breath and gentle voice, they should ask if their clothes are [too] warm or [too] cold, whether they are ill or pained, or uncomfortable in any part; and if they be so, they should proceed reverently to stroke and scratch the place. They should in the same way, going before or following after, help and support their parents in quitting or entering [the apartment]. In bringing in the basin for them to wash, the younger will carry the stand and the elder the water; they will beg to be allowed to pour out the water, and when the washing is concluded, they will hand the towel. They will ask whether they want anything, and

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then respectfully bring it. All this they will do with an appearance of pleasure to make their parents feel at ease. [They should bring] gruel, thick or thin, spirits or must, soup with vegetables, beans, wheat, spinach, rice, millet, maize, and glutinous millet – whatever they wish, in fact; with dates, chest-nuts, sugar, and honey, to sweeten their dishes; with the ordinary or the large-leaved violets, leaves of elm-trees, fresh or dry, and the most soothing rice-water to lubricate them; and with fat and oil to enrich them. The parents will be sure to taste them, and when they have done so, the young people should withdraw.

#### (iv) *A brief note on the Chun Tsiu, or Spring and Autumn Annals*

This classic is believed to be the work of Confucius himself, and to relate the history of his own province, the dukedom or state of Lu. To the ordinary reader it would seem merely a chronicle of events. It is only the instructed and enlightened student who can enter into the significance of the text. A saying from Confucius about the work will perhaps aid us: 'The facts are from the time of the Princes, Huan, of Chi, and Wen, of Chin; the style is historical, but I have taken the liberty of determining the sense myself.' In other words, the author has secretly worked into the text, which seems so naïve and innocent, a whole series of moral and religious judgements which only the initiated can perceive. Thus he says in one place: 'The people of Wei killed Chou Yu'; but in another place: 'Shang Chen, the Crown Prince of Chu, murdered his prince.' The implication is that in the first sentence the killing was a just punishment upon an evil and cruel ruler, while in the second it was both regicide and parricide – in fact murder most foul. Thus this book, like the Hebrew books of Kings, is a commentary upon a piece of history by one who believed that 'the Most High ruleth in the affairs of men'.



(v) *Aphorisms attributed to Confucius himself, from the Lun-Yü or Analects*

The semi-pictographic character of the script and the pithy, proverbial manner of the speaker make the *Lun-Yü* difficult to translate well, and the versions of the same saying vary very much. A favourite one runs in Professor Edwards' translation: 'If truth has been revealed to you in the morning you may die in the evening without repining.' But Hughes thinks this is too smooth, and does not give the homely punch of Confucius' colloquial speech. He would render it: 'In the morning, to hear the Way. In the evening, to die. What's wrong about that?' Here follow a few of the more famous of the *Analects*.\*

The Master said: A man of true breeding sets his heart on spiritual power in himself: the man of no breeding sets his heart on land.

The Master said: The man bent on public service, if he be the human-hearted kind of man, under no circumstances will he seek to live at the expense of his human-heartedness. There are occasions when he will lay down his life to preserve his human-heartedness.

The word here translated human-heartedness is *jên* in Chinese. It is a very important term, and is sometimes equated with the Greek *agapē*, which is rendered in the English Bible as charity (I Cor. xiii). Hughes offers the alternative, 'man-to-man-ness'. Others render it 'benevolence'.

Wang-Sun-Chia asked what one was to make of the saying: It is better to pay court to the spirit of the cooking stove than to the spirits in the shrine. The Master said: It is not true. The man who sins against Heaven has nowhere where he can pray.

Chung asked about human-heartedness, and the Master said: In public behave as you would in the presence of an honoured guest. Set the people their public tasks as if you

\* Translations from E. R. Hughes, with occasional variants from Waley.

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were conducting a great sacrifice. The treatment you would not have for yourself, do not hand out to others. Then there will be no resentment against you in the state, no resentment in your clan.

Among the truly educated there will be no distinction of classes.

(This has also been rendered: 'There being instruction, there will be no distinction of classes.')

The commander of a great army may be carried off into captivity, but the humblest man of his people has a will which need never be surrendered.

The gentleman (*chün-tzú*, princely man), contemplating the world, is free from unreasonable likes and dislikes. He stands for what is right.

The man of honour makes demands upon himself: the man without a sense of honour makes demands on others.

By way of contrast with these we may as well set some which have an austerer sound.

Tzu Kung asked whether men of honour also hate, and the Master said: They do. They hate those who proclaim abroad other men's evil. They hate those vulgar fellows who slander those above them. They hate those who are bold in action but have no idea of good form. They hate those who are presumptuous and obstructive.

The Master said: Be trustworthy in every respect, be devoted to the acquisition of learning, steadfast unto death for the Good. Do not enter any area which is running dangerous risks, nor live in one where the people are in rebellion. If the Way prevails among the states, you can make yourselves prominent; but if it does not prevail, then keep in retirement. If it prevails in your area, it is a disgrace to be poor and

humble. If it does not prevail, it is a disgrace to be rich and honoured.

And lastly: The Master said: Men of true breeding are in harmony with people, although they do not agree with them; but men of no breeding agree with people, and yet are not in harmony with them.

(vi) *Mo or Mo-ti*

This writer seems to have been born a little after Confucius. So far as the latter was concerned, Mo was heretic because he did not teach 'graded love' as Confucius did, with a slight but definite preference for one's own relatives, but *ai*, or universal benevolence. His writings have not attracted so much attention in China or elsewhere in the past as they are doing at the present, especially since their translation into English in 1934 by a Chinese scholar, Dr Yi Pao Mei. It is reported that the disciples of Mo had a practice of forming themselves into a kind of group or church with regular meetings at which they chanted their master's words. Here is a clear instance of the use of a sacred book to reproduce or revive an original experience, by an emotional participation in the recital of the words of some prophet or sage. We shall find another example of this later on in the proceedings of the nineteenth-century Japanese Shinto sect of Konko Kyo. In matters of state Mo was a utilitarian, and condemned the unremunerative use of state funds, especially in promoting the art of music, which he thought a shocking waste of time, money, and labour; but he also condemned aggressive war, and laboured incessantly to persuade people to practise an all-embracing love, which he said was certainly the Will of Heaven. Here is a short passage from the Mo-ti Book.

Our Master Mo said: Anyone in the Great Society who takes any business in hand, cannot dispense with a standard pattern.... That being so, what standard may be taken as suitable for ruling? The answer is that nothing is equal to imitating Heaven. Heaven's actions are all-inclusive and not private-minded, its blessings substantial and unceasing, its revelations abiding and incorruptible. Thus it was that the

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Sage-Kings imitated it. Having taken Heaven as their standard, their every movement and every action was bound to be measured in relation to Heaven. What Heaven wanted, that they did: what Heaven did not want, that they stopped doing.

The question is, what does Heaven want and what does it hate?

Heaven wants men to love and be profitable to each other, and does not want men to hate and maltreat each other. How do we know this? Because Heaven embraces all in its love of them, and embraces all in its benefits to them. How do we know that Heaven embraces all? Because it does so in its gifts of food.

Take then the Great Society. There are no large or small states: all are Heaven's townships. Take men. There are no young men or old, no patricians or plebeians: all are the subjects of Heaven. This is so, for there is no one who does not fatten oxen and sheep and dogs and pigs and make pure wine and sacrificial cakes with which to do reverence and service to Heaven. Can this be anything else than Heaven owning all and giving food to all? Assuming then that Heaven embraces all and gives food to all, how could it be said that it does not want men to love and benefit each other?

#### (vii) *Mencius (or Meng Ko) — fourth century B.C.*

He was roughly contemporary with Aristotle, and was an aristocrat with a great admiration for Confucius. He is noted for his psychological approach to ethical problems, and his doctrine of the Mean in conduct recalls us to the fact that the Buddha spoke of his system as the Middle Way, while the Greek philosopher Aristotle made his system of ethics depend upon his doctrine of the Mean (or right proportion between two extremes) as the secret of good character. Meng also declared the essential goodness of human nature. Here are several short extracts from Meng Ko's book on conduct.

Kung Tu said: Master Kao says that men's nature is neither good nor evil, whilst there are others who say that some men have a good and some an evil nature. Now you, Meng, say that men's nature is good. If this is the case, then are all these others wrong?

Master Meng replied: Speaking realistically, it is possible for men to be good, and that is what I mean when I say that men's nature is good. If they become evil, it is not the fault of their natural powers. Thus all men have a sense of compassion, also a sense of shame over wickedness, a sense of reverence and a sense of truth and error. The sense of compassion is equivalent to individual morality, the sense of shame to public morality, the sense of reverence to ritual propriety, and the sense of right and wrong equals wisdom. These four are not infused into us from without. We are invariably possessed of them, and that without reflecting upon them.

Master Meng said: Those who exercise their minds to the full come to understand the nature with which they are born; and if they understand it they understand Heaven. They keep their minds alive and nourish their nature, and so serve Heaven.

Meng's view of man's relation to Deity:

Master Meng said: Shun came from being a farmer: Fu Yuch was called to office from the building of walls, Chiao Ko from salting fish, Kuan Yi-wu from being in prison, Sun-shu Ao from the sea, and Pai Li-hsi from the market-place. The fact is that when Heaven proposes to impose a great responsibility on a man, it is sure first to discipline his purposes by suffering, and his bones and sinews by bodily toil, to starve his limbs and flesh, to empty his very self, confounding all his undertakings. Thereby it stirs his mind, toughens his nature, and makes good his disabilities. Men regularly have to make mistakes before they are able to reform, have to be

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troubled in mind and perplexed in thought before they can communicate it. Without lawless families and arrogant officers within, and hostile states and anxieties abroad, countries constantly go to ruin. By this we come to know that life is in relation to sorrow and affliction, and death is in relation to peace and joy.

Master Meng said, Those who exercise their minds [i.e. mind-heart] to the full come to understand their congenital nature; and if they understand their nature they understand Heaven. They keep their minds alive and nourish their nature and so serve Heaven. Untimely death and long life are not two different things for them, for they cultivate themselves as they await the issue; and so they take their stand on destiny.... There is nothing that is not destiny. Therefore accept obediently your true destiny. Thus the man who comprehends destiny does not stand under an overhanging wall. To die because of complete fidelity to one's principles is a true destiny. To die because one is a criminal in chains is not a true destiny.

(viii) *From a later Confucian classic, The Doctrine of the Mean*

The will of God in us is called our nature. That which guides our nature is called the Way. What makes the Way possible is education. One must not for a moment depart from this Way. Anything from which one may depart, that is not the Way.

For this reason, the superior man is cautious and careful, even when he sees nothing; and he is afraid and a-tremble, even when he hears nothing. There is nothing more revealed than the hidden, and nothing more mighty than the invisible. Therefore man keeps watch over his most secret thoughts.

At the point where the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, of sadness and joy, have not yet made their appearance, at

that point is the germ of our spiritual being. Where these feelings express themselves and all strike the correct rhythm, at that point is the state of harmonious motion. That spiritual germ is the great root of all being. This harmonious motion is the only path in the world which leads to the goal. If the spiritual germ and the harmonious motion are realized, heaven and earth are in order, and all beings are developed.

(ix) *The Táo-te-King*

This is to many the favourite Chinese classic, because it is short enough for anyone to read it all through at a sitting in a good translation. But what is a good translation? There is a new one just available by a Chinese, but it is not certain whether it is better than the most widely known one of recent years, by Arthur Waley. Waley thinks that Wilhelm's is the best rendering of the book as 'scripture', but he himself has tried, as I think Hughes has also done, to arrive at what the script meant when it was first written down. Waley gives the date of the original as about 240 B.C., and says that the author is anonymous, but it is believed that he has crystallized a teaching which existed some two centuries earlier, and was the product of a school of Chinese Quietists. Whether Lao-tzû, its reputed founder, was a real or a legendary person remains an open question. The school did not expect that everyone would become a Quietist ascetic, but they evidently hoped to convert a sufficient number of enlightened persons to provide the community with a body of sages or *sheng* who would be like Plato's philosopher-princes, but would rule without making their power felt, as it was said had happened in the golden age of antiquity. There are indications in the text that Taoism, as it is called, was associated with something corresponding to the Indian *yoga*, but there is no reason for supposing any direct indebtedness to India. Dr Joseph Needham a few years ago purchased and brought back to Cambridge a large corpus of Taoist sacred books, but until these have been fully edited we shall not know all that we would like about this movement.

The *Táo-te-King* is brief, paradoxical, and aphoristic. It is its theology which is important, because its doctrine, *wu-wei* or passivity, has

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not only travelled into Japan with Zen Buddhism, but seems to have been inserted first into Buddhism in its Chinese form before the transit. *Zen* or *Chan* is in fact a genuine Chinese product, a form of Buddhism which Chinese wisdom has itself invented. And more than this. When the Nestorian missions entered China, it was the teaching of Jesus about non-resistance to evil which attracted the attention of the Taoist-minded Chinese, because they saw in it something which they thought corresponded to their own principle of *wu-wei*. There is also a very interesting parallel between the quietist theology of Tào and the conception of Nature which was proclaimed by some nineteenth-century Christian thinkers who were trying to combine their Darwinism with their religion – e.g. Tennyson, Hort, and Kingsley. The best-known example perhaps is in Kingsley's *Water Babies*, where he makes Mother Carey personify Mother Nature, and represents her as saying: 'I make things make themselves.' It is certain that Kingsley had no knowledge of the *Táo-te-King*, since he died in 1875, whereas the first English version was published in 1891. Yet in Max Müller's edition we read (ch. 37): 'Táo never does, yet through It all things are done.' It should be noted that the official Chinese Protestant version of the Fourth Gospel renders the word *Logos* by *Táo*.

One may query as to how Tao will seem to the Marxist. On the one hand it appears rather like the Dialectic Process, even to the extent of its ruthlessness, for we read: 'Whatever is against Táo will soon perish' (ch. 30). But Taoism is against much government, and dislikes interfering with the individual, although the 'withering away of the state' might tally with this.

I give here one long and two very short passages from the *Táo-te-King*, and one passage from a later but, as some will think, the greatest of the Taoist teachers, Chuang Chou.

1. The Táo that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Táo. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.

[Conceived of as] having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; [conceived of as] having a name, it is the Mother of all things.



Always without desire we must be found,  
If its deep mystery we would sound;  
But if desire always within us be,  
Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.

Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.

The Tào is [like] the emptiness of a vessel, and in our employment of it we must be on our guard against all fulness. How deep and unfathomable it is, as if it were the Honoured Ancestor of all things!

We should blunt our sharp points, and unravel the complications of things; we should attemper our brightness, and bring ourselves into agreement with the obscurity of others. How pure and still the Tào is, as if it would ever so continue!

I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God.

We look at it, and we do not see it, and we name it 'the Equable'. We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it 'the Inaudible'. We try to grasp it, and do not get hold of it, and we name it 'the Subtle'. With these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain The One.

Its upper part is not bright, and its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in its action, it yet cannot be named and then it again returns and becomes nothing. This is called the Form of the Formless, and the Semblance of the Invisible; this is called the Fleeting and Indeterminable.

We meet it and do not see its Front; we follow it, and do not see its Back. When we can lay hold of the Tào of old to direct the things of the present day, and are able to know it as it was of old in the beginning, this is called [unwinding] the clue of Tào.

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All-pervading is the Great Tào. It may be found on the left hand and on the right.

All things depend on it for their production, which it gives to them, not one refusing obedience to it. When its work is accomplished, it does not claim the name of having done it. It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes no assumption of being their Lord: it may be named in the smallest things. All things return [to their root and disappear], and do not know that it is it which presides over their doing so; it may be named in the greater things.

The Tào, considered as unchanging, has no name.

Though in its primordial simplicity it may be small, the whole world dares not deal with [one embodying] it as a minister. If a feudal prince or the king could guard and hold it, all would spontaneously submit themselves to him.

Heaven and Earth [under its guidance] unite together and send down the sweet dew, which, without the directions of men, reaches equally everywhere as of its own accord.

As soon as it proceeds to action, it has a name. When it once has that name [men] can know to rest in it. When they know to rest in it, they can be free from all risk of failure and error.

The relation of the Tào to all the world is like that of the great rivers and seas to the streams from the valleys.

2. The Tào [Way] of Heaven is not to contend and yet be able to conquer.

Not to declare its will and yet to get a response,  
Not to summon but have things come spontaneously,  
To work very slowly with well-laid plans.  
Heaven's net is vast, with wide meshes:

Yet nothing is lost.

3. Let me do nothing and the people will transform themselves.

Let me love quiescence and the people will put themselves right.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

And here is one short paragraph from Chuang Chou, the greatest of Taoist thinkers.

Inaction is the real part of fame, the storehouse of all plans, the responsible head of all business, the master of all knowledge. Identify yourself completely with infinity-eternity, and wander in the non-self. Carry to the highest what you have received from Heaven, but do not reveal your success in this. Be empty, that is all. The perfect man's use of his mind is like a mirror. He does not anticipate events, nor does he go counter to them. Thus it is that he is able to master things and not be injured by them.

Our final extract is from a neo-Confucian of the twelfth century A.D. called Chu Hsi:

We need not talk about empty and far-away things; if we would know the reality of T'ao we must seek it within our own nature.

Each one has within him the principle of right, what we call T'ao, the road along which we ought to walk.

The means by which we all may day by day banish human desire and return to Divine Law lie within our reach, and to use them is our duty.

The one thing we must realize is that we must use our earnest effort and master it, get rid of its excesses, and restore the Mean.

Virtue is the practice of moral law.

Virtue is what is received into the heart. Before serving one's parents and following one's elder brother, already to possess a perfectly filial and fraternal mind: this is what is termed virtue.

Love itself is the original substance of love; Reverence is love in graceful expression; Righteousness is love in judgment; and wisdom is love in discriminating.

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Sincerity is the principle of reality. It is, to be the same whether before men's faces or behind their backs.

To be devoid of anything false is spontaneous Sincerity; to allow no deception is Sincerity acquired by effort.

It will be seen that Chu Hsi attempts to combine features from the various schools of Chinese classical thought.

Anyone who reads these extracts can easily understand why it was that the Jesuit missionaries to China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came to believe that the Chinese possessed the main elements of Natural Religion, and only needed the addition of Divine Revelation in order to complete their faith.

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### ORPHIC HYMNS

This collection of religious poems belongs to the days of the Roman Empire. It is not in archaic Greek, nor is the language ancient in form, but its interest lies in the fact that it would certainly appear to have been the sacred hymn-book of a mystery-cult of late pagan antiquity. It is thus quite different from the hymn-book and liturgy of the Arval Brethren, where the hymn I have quoted is an archaic survival. There are about eighty of these so-called Orphic hymns. Orpheus himself is an elusive figure, and for detailed information about him readers must be referred to the excellent work by Professor Guthrie, who thinks that the evidence renders it not quite impossible that he was a historical personage somewhere in prehistoric Thrace. He was at any rate regarded by everybody in the Graeco-Roman world for centuries as the founder of a religion based on a sort of Bible which included an account of Creation. This particular sacred book we do not possess, and we only know its possible contents at second hand. The author was referred to as *theologos*, and we have reason to believe that Plato, among others, made use of the Orphic literature. There are quotations in Neo-Platonic and other writings which claim to be from poems composed by Orpheus, and it is thought possible

that they may come from writings as old as the fifth century B.C. Guthrie gives translations of these fragments (pp. 137-42), but they are mostly so small as to make full insertion here unprofitable. Two only seem worth giving:

(a) *From a hymn to Zeus* (quoted by Porphyry), beginning:

Zeus became first, Zeus of the bright lightning last. Zeus is head, Zeus middle, and from Zeus all things have their being. Zeus became male. Zeus was an immortal maiden. Zeus is the foundation of heaven and earth. Zeus is king, and Zeus himself first Father of all.

(b) *Two passages of an eschatological character* (quoted by Proclus):

All who live purely beneath the rays of the sun, so soon as they die have a smoother path in a fair meadow beside deep-flowing Acheron, but those who have done evil beneath the rays of the sun, the insolent, are brought down below Kokytos to the chilly horrors of Tartarus. ... The souls of beasts and winged birds, when they flit away, and sacred life forsakes the creature, not one of them is brought to the house of Hades, but each flutters aimlessly where it is, until some other creature snatch it up as it mingles with the gusts of the wind. But when it is a man who leaves the light of the sun, then the immortal souls are brought down by Kyllenian Hermes to the vast hidden part of the earth.

The actual hymns of the cult-fellowship make no pretensions to be the original works of Orpheus, but are addressed to one or another of the pantheon of Greek gods, seven to Dionysus, three to Zeus, and so on, with others directed to personifications of natural phenomena such as Aither, Stars, Clouds, and Winds. To this extent they have the appearance of a collection like the *Rig-Veda*, though much smaller, but except that the congregation which used them described themselves as *mystai*, nothing certain is known about the nature of the ceremonies during which they were sung. The suggestion has been made that the spot at which they were used was at

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Pergamon in Asia Minor, and there are good reasons for accepting this view. Pergamon was an enormous centre of worship, and Guthrie says that it has a large walled terrace levelled out on the side of a hill, with temples, statues, altars, rooms, halls, and rows of seats in tiers, while the inscriptions indicate the worship of a large variety of deities. The singing of hymns was evidently an important part of the worship, since the inscriptions reveal the names of various officials as *hymnodoi*, *hymnodidaskaloi*, and *hymnesteriai*. (One supposes that a *hymnodidaskalos* must have been the equivalent of a choirmaster.) The main interest seems to have been to secure a blissful immortality, initiation into the cult fellowship being part of the process, and hymns being specially addressed to Dionysus as King of the Dead, over whom he rules with his consort Persephone. Both are the offspring of Zeus and Demeter, the Sky-god and the Earth-mother, and are therefore brother and sister. The whole scheme has a curious resemblance to what we find among the deities of Hinduism. I give here (a) a hymn to Dionysus, (b) a hymn to Persephone, (c) an address to the same goddess which was found on a gold plate in a tomb near Naples, perhaps earlier in date.

#### (a) *A hymn to Dionysus*

I invoke the law-giving, rod-bearing Dionysos,  
The never-to-be-forgotten seed, Eubuleus of many names,  
Who art sacred and sacrosanct Misē, ineffable queen!  
Male and female of double nature, the redeemer [or curse-  
loosing] Iacchos,  
Whether thou art delighting in the sweet-smelling temple  
of Eleusis,  
Or art solemnizing mysteries with the Mother in Phrygia,  
Or art rejoicing in Cyprus with the fair-crowned Cytherea,  
Or dost exult in the pure wheat-bearing plains  
With thy mother divine, black-robed, august Isis  
And thy busy nurses near the Egyptian stream,  
Be gracious and come thou benevolent to accomplish our  
tasks.

(b) *A hymn to Persephone*

Persephone, daughter of great Zeus, come, thou beloved one;

Only-begotten goddess, accept the offerings well pleasing to thee.

Much-honoured consort of Pluto, dear giver of life.

Praxidice, decked with love-locks, chaste offspring of Deo.

Giver of birth to the Eumenides, queen of those below the earth,

Virgin whom Zeus begat in unspeakable nuptials,

Mother of the loud-shouting, many-formed Eubuleus,

Playfellow of the Hours, light-bringer of glorious form,

Dread ruler of all, virgin teeming with fruit,

Brilliant-rayed, horned one, the sole desire of mortals.

Vernal one, who rejoicest in the breath of the meadows,

Who dost bring to light the sacred shape of green fruit buds.

Who in autumn time wast wedded in a ravished bed:

Who art alone the life and death of much-enduring mortals.

Persephone! For thou dost ever nourish and slay all things.

Hear, blessed goddess, and send up fruits from the earth,

Granting us in abundance peace and gentle-handed health,

And a life of happiness, such as leads old age untroubled

To thy realm, O queen, and to dread Pluto.

(c) *An address to Persephone*

Out of the Pure I come, Pure Queen of those below.

And Eukles and Eubuleus and other Gods and Demons;

For I also avow that I am of blessed race.

And I have paid the penalty for deeds unrighteous

Whether it is that Fate laid me low, or the Gods Immortal,

Or [that Zeus has struck me?] with star-flung thunderbolt.

I have flown out of the sorrowful weary Wheel;

I have passed with eager feet to the Circle desired;

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I have sunk beneath the bosom of Despoina, Queen of the Underworld;  
I have passed with eager feet to [or from] the Circle desired:  
And now I come a suppliant to holy Persephone,  
That of her grace she receive me to the seats of the Hallowed.

The philosophical writings of the Greeks never attained to the position occupied in India by the Upanishads. There is for example no 'śruti' or 'canon' of Plato. Not only space therefore but consistency forbids any inclusion of such religious texts as the famous fragment of Xenophanes, or passages from Plato and Aristotle which have a theological bearing. Readers who know Greek, however, will find a good collection, covering not only the classical but also the Hellenistic period, in a little book called *Pantheon*, published a few years ago at Stuttgart, and compiled by Gerhard Kittel and others.

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### THE BIBLE

For English-speaking readers it may seem unnecessary to include in this volume any passages from the Christian scriptures. It is however reasonable to consider that some who read this book or its predecessor will not be familiar with the Bible at first hand, and in any case Chapter IX of my *Comparative Religion* needs some extracts to illustrate it. Such extracts are therefore given here. But first we must needs have a brief account of how what are commonly called the Old and New Testaments came to be formed.

It is a common error to suppose that the Old Testament as we now have it was complete and canonical at the time of Christ. Although between the time of Ezra and the Roman conquest much of it was put into shape, largely, by the priests, it was still incomplete in the first century A.D. The Bible of Jesus consisted only of the Torah and the Nebiim, i. e. the Law and the Prophets, comprising the Pentateuch, the prophetic-historical books, and the alleged utterances of the



prophets, together with *some* (but not all) of the Psalms. What are called the Kethubim, i.e. the Writings, comprising the remaining books of the Old Testament including Daniel, though known and read, did not receive authority until A.D. 90 or later, and some of them even as late as A.D. 135. Proverbs, Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs were all disputed books for some considerable time. The usually accepted conclusion is that the Council of Jamnia, A.D. 90, gave authority to most of the Old Testament as we now see it. After the declaration that these books were holy, it became wicked and irreverent to add anything to them, and no further books were allowed to be added to the list, once it had been closed. The written Torah thus became fixed, and could not be touched. But it was permissible and even necessary to interpret it and to apply it to the details of everyday life. Hence the growth of the oral tradition, of which we shall speak in the next section, under the heading of the Talmud.

The question naturally arises at this point: What led the Jews to frame a corpus of sacred books? Did the idea come to them from elsewhere, or did it come to them as a natural consequence of the accumulation of their national literature after the deportation and return? Temple libraries we know to have existed both in Mesopotamia and Egypt, but their existence does not seem to have been accompanied by any cleavage between one part of the collection and another. At any rate no evidence of this is as yet forthcoming. In India on the other hand we have seen evidence of the growth of a distinction between *śruti* and *smṛiti*. This distinction is expressly stated in the Laws of Manu, which may belong to the second or third century A.D., but the use of the word *śruti* to denote direct revelation goes back to the Brahmanical or priestly period, perhaps 700 B.C. It seems likely therefore that the Hindu distinction between canonical and non-canonical literature began as soon as there was any material held sacred in popular esteem which did not properly belong to the corpus formed by the four Vedas, the Brahmanas, and the principal Upanishads. The Graeco-Roman world does not seem to have worked with the category of canonical literature,\* while China, though revering some of her books as classical, treats them as humanistic

\* Unless we consider the lost Orphic books to have been such (see the last section).

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compositions, in the text of which errors may occur, and not as divine revelation. It seems therefore that unless the Hindus and the Jews developed their ideas independently of one another, the idea of a sacred corpus may have come to the Jews from further east. We can see one way in which this may have occurred. During the deportation period, many Jews must have become familiar with ideas current in Mesopotamia, especially while it was under Iranian domination. Thus it has often been said that it was from this contact that they derived their angelology and their conception of a Divine Vicegerent, the Messiah. We have seen that a kind of sacred corpus was beginning to exist in Iran as the result of the preservation of the literature associated with the reforming movement of Zarathustra, and that some of this may be as early as about 560 B.C. This would make it possible for the Jews to have been influenced by contact with Iran, and it would of course also be possible for ideas about a sacred corpus to have penetrated to them from the direction of the Punjab. This however seems an unnecessary hypothesis. What is more probable is that in the Axial Age a stage was reached in various countries in which it came to be felt desirable to have some record of the various alleged prophetic communications which had emerged, and which were felt to have a strong element of 'givenness' about them. Each country did this in its own way, and what we get in the case of the Jews represents simply the Jewish form of making such a corpus, no doubt determined by the circumstances of their history. The form may resemble to some extent what is to be found elsewhere. It is the content which is distinctive.

#### (i) *The Old Testament\**

The following passages are provided or suggested as illustrations of the development of Hebrew monotheism:

- (a) The Hymn of Creation, which appears in the first chapter of Genesis, and may have been composed during the exile in Mesopotamia.

\* Note on the *text* of the Old Testament: The Hebrew text of the Old Testament which is in common use is that which took shape at the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century A.D. This was the work of scholars known as Masoretes or Baalé Hamassoreth, i.e. 'Masters of the transmission (or Massorah)'. The Greek translation made in Egypt about 250 years before Christ, which from

- (b) The story of the call of Moses.
- (c) A selection from the oldest prophetic book – that of Amos.
- (d) The famous denunciation of ritual sacrifice in the sixth chapter of Micah.
- (e) The declaration of monotheism in deutero-Isaiah.
- (f) The vision of the Suffering Servant in trito-Isaiah.
- (g) The vision of the Heavenly Man in Daniel.

The translations are not all from the same version. It may be objected that they should have been uniform in source, but I have thought it better in this case to show, as I have also done in the case of the Qur'ān, how different scholars have treated the text. The first passage therefore is from Moffatt's fairly recent rendering, the next is from the Authorized Version, with notes on the text, the third is another passage showing how Moffatt has tried (like Bell in the case of the Qur'ān) to reproduce the rhythm of the original. (d), (e), and (g) are from the Authorized Version, and (f) is from the Revised Version.

It should be borne in mind that the Old Testament as it stood in the time of Christ was perhaps the only literature he knew, unless he was acquainted with some of the Rabbinic writings and apocryphal books like Ecclesiasticus. It had therefore, humanly speaking, a profound influence upon the shaping of his thought and teaching, as well as upon the form given to it in transmission.

(a) *The Hymn of Creation (Genesis i)*

When God began to form the universe, the world was void and vacant, darkness lay over the abyss; but the spirit of God

the legend about the seventy-two Jewish scholars who are said to have completed it is commonly known as the Septuagint, contains many differences from the Massoretic text, and this presupposes the existence of earlier Hebrew texts which did not agree with the latter. Some of the readings may seem preferable, but the situation has been complicated by the discovery in 1947 of a large number of old Hebrew MSS. deposited in jars in a cave near the Dead Sea. The study of these is as yet far from complete, and it may well be that they will in the end revolutionize our knowledge as to what the original or at least the very early text of the Hebrew scriptures was like: but it has been said that so far as the study has gone, it has on the whole tended to confirm the choice of the Massoretes in their selection of readings. The Dead Sea scrolls are the oldest extant MSS. of the Hebrew Old Testament, whatever their exact date.

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was hovering over the waters, and God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness; God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night. Even came and morning came, making one day. Then God said, 'Let there be a Vault between the waters, to divide them'; so God made the Vault, dividing the waters under the Vault from the waters above the Vault, and God called the Vault heaven. Even came and morning came, making the second day. Then God said, 'Let the waters below the heaven be gathered into one place, to let dry land appear.' And so it was. God called the dry land Earth, and the gathered waters he called Sea. God saw that it was good. And God said, 'Let the earth put out verdure, plants that bear seed and trees yielding fruit of every kind, fruit with seed in it.' And so it was; the earth brought forth verdure, plants bearing seed of every kind and trees yielding fruit of every kind, fruit with seed in it. God saw that it was good. Evening came and morning came, making the third day. Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the Vault of heaven to separate day from night, to mark out the sacred seasons, the days and the years; let them shine in the Vault of heaven, to shed light on the earth'; and so it was. For God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, the lesser light together with the stars to rule the night; God set them in the Vault of heaven to shed light upon earth, to rule the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. Evening came and morning came, making the fourth day. Then God said, 'Let the waters teem with shoals of living creatures, and let birds fly over the earth under the open Vault of heaven.' So God formed the great sea-monsters and every kind of living creature that moves, with which the waters teem, and also every kind of winged bird. God saw that it was good, and God blessed them; 'Be fruitful,' he said, 'multiply, and fill the waters of the sea; let

the birds multiply on earth.' Evening came and morning came, making the fifth day. Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature, animals, reptiles, and wild beasts.' And so it was. God made every kind of wild beast, every kind of animal, and every kind of reptile; and God saw that it was good. Then said God, 'Let us make man in our own likeness, to resemble us, with mastery over the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the animals, every wild beast of the earth, and every reptile that crawls on earth.' So God formed man in his own likeness, in the likeness of God he formed him, male and female he formed both. And God blessed them; God said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, mastering the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, and every living creature that crawls on earth.' God also said, 'See, I give you every plant that bears seed all over the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; be that your food. To every wild beast on earth, to every bird of the air, and to every living creature that crawls on earth, I give all the green growth for food.' And so it was. God saw all that he had made, and very good it was. Evening came and morning came, making the sixth day.\*

Jews themselves do not appear to have taken this hymn literally. The reader will find some remarks about it in an extract given on page 218 from the Alexandrian Jew Philo, while St Paul in his letter to the Romans, ch. viii, has an interpretation of the creative process which is much more in harmony with the idea of creative evolution. It does not appear that in this respect his contemporaries thought him specially heretical, even though they attacked him on other grounds.

(b) *The Call of Moses* (*Exodus iii.* 1-6, 12-14)

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

\* Moffatt's translation.

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And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. ...

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.\*

The story of this theophany, which has suggested many naturalistic explanations, such as a great camp-fire of thorns, or a sunrise seen through a thicket, has also inspired some noble poetry: for example:

No pebble at your feet but proves a sphere.

No chaffinch but implies the cherubim.

Earth's crammed with Heaven, and every common bush  
Afire with God.

But only he sees it who takes off his shoes

The rest sit round and pluck blackberries.

\* Translation from the Authorized Version.

The name of the deity revealed to Moses is an adaptation or interpretation of a very ancient divine name Ya-u or Yahu, which occurs in old Semitic inscriptions as far back as 2100 B.C. Whatever it may have originally meant, as now given it probably means 'He-who-will-be', and the correct translation of verse 14 is 'I-will-be-that-I-will-be' and 'I-will-be hath sent me unto you'. In other words, God is declared to be 'He who is continually revealing Himself in the course of events'.

(c) *Extracts from the book of the prophet Amos*

The date usually assigned to the original portions of Amos is not far off 763 B.C. They are therefore much older than the Pentateuch as it now stands, and it is one of the wonders of antiquity that these forceful, spontaneous, and burning sentences should have come down to us in what seems so authentic a text. It is not deemed conceivable that they should be the invention of a later date, and so pseudographical. They are therefore a tribute to the care of some early group of 'sons of the prophets' in preserving in manuscript form the pioneer utterances of this countryman from Tekoa. The main features of the prophecies of Amos are their striking universalism and their intense moral indignation. Amos represents his God Yahweh as being quite as much concerned with the moral government of Moab, Edom, Tyre, and other neighbouring states as with Israel itself. He is no longer a mere local or national divinity, not even imperial, but the God of the whole world, and the Lord of History, and His demands on humanity amount to a claim for righteousness in conduct, for justice and mercy, and not for unlimited gifts of food offered to Him in ceremonial sacrifice. To us who read after seventeen hundred years have passed by, all this seems commonplace. We have to learn to recognize how revolutionary it must have seemed at the time.

The reader is advised to look at Amos, chapter v, verses 6 to end, in the Revised Version, but he must remember that scholars like Driver have considerably altered our view of the nature of the original text. Verse 26 in particular is difficult and probably corrupt (see Canney upon it in Peake's *Dictionary of the Bible*). A short extract covering some of this recommended passage is given here, and is taken from the new translation by Dr Moffatt.

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Listen to this, you cows of Bashan,  
You women in high Samaria,  
You who defraud the poor and are hard on the needy,  
Who tell your husbands, Let us have wine to drink!  
As sure as I am God, the Lord Eternal swears,  
Your day is coming,  
When you will be dragged out with prongs,  
The last of you with fish-hooks;  
Out you go, through breaches in the walls,  
Each of you headlong,  
Chased to mount Hermon –  
By order of the Eternal....  
Go to Bethel, go on with your sins.  
Pile sin on sin at Gilgal.  
Ay, sacrifice in the morning,  
And every third day pay your tithes,  
Burn your dough as a thankoffering,  
Announce your free-will gifts –  
Oh, make them public.  
For you love that, you Israelites....  
You who make justice a bitter thing,  
Trampling on the law,  
Hating a man who exposes you,  
Loathing him who is honest with you.  
For this – for crushing the weak,  
And forcing them to give you grain,  
Houses of ashlar you may build,  
But you shall never dwell in them,  
And vineyards you may plant,  
But you shall drink no wine from them.  
I know your countless crimes,  
Your manifold misdeeds –  
Browbeating honest men, accepting bribes,  
Defrauding the poor of justice.



Your sacred festivals? – I hate them, scorn them;  
 Your sacrifices? – I will not smell their smoke;  
 You offer Me your gifts? – I will not take them.  
 You offer fatted cattle? – I will not look at them.  
 No more of your hymns for Me!  
 I will not listen to your lutes.  
 No, let justice well up like fresh water, let honesty roll in  
 full tide!

(d) *Micah vi. 1-8*

Professor Burkitt has called the book of Micah 'the swan-song of the prophecy of the Northern kingdom of the Hebrews', but there is some question as to whether Micah vi does not belong to a later date than the rest of the book. So far as sentiments go however, it differs little from Amos, and the eighth verse is to be counted as one of the noblest sayings of antiquity.

Hear ye now what the Lord saith; arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.

Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.

O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? – testify against me.

For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, – with calves of a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with

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ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?\*

(e) *Isaiah xl. 12-18*

The theology of this passage (which is datable as not far off the time of the Return) shows a supreme revolt against anthropomorphic ideas about God. The Deity of deutero-Isaiah is the Transcendent Ruler of the Universe, inscrutable, indescribable, and omnipotent. Utterances such as this would seem to have exercised a profound influence upon the Arab prophet Mohammed, when at a much later date he encountered them.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him?

With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgement, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?†

\* Translation A.V.

† Translation A.V.

(f) *Isaiah lii. 13–liii. 5*

The date of this passage is difficult to place with certainty, but it is not likely to be by the prophet of the Return, but by some much later seer, who possibly did not very much precede the Christian era. The idea of Israel as the Suffering Servant of Yahweh has been challenged by some, who think that an individual martyr is implied. Others see the influence of the Maccabaeon persecutions. One thing is clear. It was seized upon by early Christians as accounting for the sufferings of Jesus, in whom they saw the fulfilment of an ideal picture, and it has had a profound influence upon Christian theology, especially in regard to the Atonement.

Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

As many were astonished at thee; (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:)

So shall he startle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; and he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs – and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, – smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.\*

\* Translation R.V. with amendments.

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(g) *Daniel vii. 2-14*

Daniel spake, and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking boastful things.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand

times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened.

I beheld then because of the voice of a great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The book in which this passage occurs was not included in the Old Testament canon at the time when Christ lived. Nevertheless it belongs to a class of religious literature, Apocalyptic, which had a deep effect upon the minds of pious Jews at the period of the ministry of Jesus, and beyond doubt affected his own estimate of his mission. It seems as certain as anything can be that he thought of himself as 'Daniel's Man', and the grandeur of the picture of a truly humane commonwealth, as contrasted with those whose rulers are but predatory wild beasts, is one which captures the imagination.

As a specimen of modern exegesis it may be said that there is no reason to seek any abstruse meaning for the animal figures in the vision. The four beasts represent the four worldly empires of Babylonia, Media, Persia, and Philip of Macedon (Greek). The ten horns are ten kings whose rule grew out of that of the Macedonian empire (i.e. Alexander the Great, Seleucus I, Antiochus I, Antiochus II, Seleucus II, Seleucus III, Antiochus III, Seleucus IV, Heliodorus, Demetrius), while the little horn is the villain Antiochus IV who dispossessed the last three and who called himself Epiphanes, or the Illustrious, though his enemies called him Epimanes, or the Madman. It was he who persecuted the Jews and was fought by the Maccabees.

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The final picture is of the kingdom of the Messiah, God's Vicegerent. It was a vague picture, and was filled out by different people in various ways, sometimes as in Psalm cx, as representing a military Führer, sometimes, as in Zechariah, a man of peace, sometimes, as in deuterio-Isaiah, the suffering servant of God.

#### (ii) *The Apocrypha*

Something must needs be said in conclusion about the 'border-line' literature between the Old and the New Testaments. This usually goes by the name of the Apocrypha, or hidden books, as distinct from those openly acknowledged in public. Besides the canonical books of the Jews there is a considerable bulk of literature, of which St Jerome says that it is 'read for instruction of life and manners', but not to establish any doctrine. A good many of these books are to be found in a full Bible, between the two main sections, and they are quite as miscellaneous as the ordinary scriptures. I and II Maccabees are history (written with some prejudice). Tobit is a sensational novel. Susanna is a moral tale of virtue vindicated and vice convicted. Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus are proverbial philosophy. Some of the items are additions made to canonical books such as Daniel, which occur only in the Greek text.

But besides these biblical apocrypha there is a considerable mass of Jewish literature which is valued by orthodox Hebrews, though not treated as sacred or canonical revelations. This consists mainly of commentaries upon the Old Testament, expounding the Law or Torah, and applying it to special circumstances. Less generally valued by modern Jews, but undoubtedly playing an important role at the time they were written, are the various apocalyptic and visionary books. Chief among these is the Book of Enoch. Other works are the Psalms of Solomon, the Apocalypse of Baruch, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. These all display the common feature of bearing the names of Hebrew worthies of antiquity, although they were actually composed during the period roughly 200 B.C.—A.D. 100. They are in fact pious forgeries, or rather, prophetic writings, the authors of which concealed their identity, for security reasons, under the

cover of pseudonyms. Passages in them seem to show Christian influence.

The chief interest of these for the modern world is twofold: (1) the influence which some of them undoubtedly had upon the form in which Christ delivered his teaching, since he was plainly acquainted with their contents. This is peculiarly true of Enoch and Ecclesiasticus; (2) the light they throw upon religion and life among the Jews in the period when they were written.

Outside the New Testament lie some similar apocryphal books. These are never to-day bound up with the Bible, though in past centuries a few of them were appended to manuscript collections of the ordinary gospels and epistles.

Anyone who wants to see what they are like can hardly do better than read Dr Montagu Rhodes James's *Apocryphal New Testament*, which gives not only translations of all the more important passages, but also very clear and interesting descriptions of the various books. In general these consist of gospels, and acts of saints and martyrs, which are so full of extravagant and obviously legendary matter that they make the canonical works stand out in sober and dignified relief.

In bulk these works are considerable. Dr James's book does not give them entirely without abridgement, yet his pages run to 570-odd, more than two-thirds the length of the Old Testament. Stories from them were acceptable in popular medieval Christianity, and appear in stained glass or in mural paintings (e.g. some of the glass in King's College Chapel, Cambridge).

### (iii) *Passages from the New Testament*

The Christian movement entered the world as the inheritor of the Jewish sacred books. Of course in its earliest years the Jewish canon, as we have seen, was not fully completed, but by the middle of the second century the Church had accepted all of it, including the Kethubim, which in the time of Christ himself had been only on the fringe of recognition by the Jewish authorities. The Church had however at first no corpus of literature which it could call its own. Nevertheless, as the new and spiritual Israel, it soon felt the need of some kind of series of authoritative books corresponding to the Torah.

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It is not surprising therefore that we find a gradual growth, within the Church, of appeal to certain pieces of written material rather than to others. This growth falls into three main epochs.

*First, the period up to about A.D. 220.* During the early part of this there was no Christian writing apart from the genuine Pauline epistles, and even these were sent to local churches and as yet received no general recognition. The Gospel tradition was clearly oral at first, and probably Aramaic, and even where the making of written records began, these too may have been at first written in the same language. We know less than we thought we did thirty years ago about the actual composition of the Greek gospels. We are quite clear that of the three gospels which we call synoptic, Mark, Matthew, and Luke, Mark's is the earliest, and that the other two are made up by an editing of Mark, which in each case is different, plus an editing of another source of material, to which the name Q has been applied, plus also additional material, such as the accounts of the birth, which is not the same in Matthew as it is in Luke. But we still do not know with any certainty how much the Marcan narrative itself was edited before it reached its present form; nor do we know who was the author of Q (it may have been Matthew himself); nor again do we know who put 'Matthew' into its present form, though we think that must have been done after the relations between the Jews and the Christians had become very much worsened, and also after some form of Christian worship similar to that of the synagogue had begun to be celebrated, at which readings of scripture were needed, since there are signs that 'Matthew' is arranged for liturgical purposes and as a sort of a lectionary: so it may have received its present shape about A.D. 120. With regard to Luke, there seems no special reason for doubting its authorship, i.e. a Greek doctor who was in attendance on Paul. Here again there may have been two editions, the first one starting at chapter iii, and the second one including the so-called infancy gospel. The book called Acts claims to be a continuation of the gospel by the same compiler, and it is not unreasonable to assume that both reached their present shape before A.D. 100, but how long before we cannot say with certainty. Since the writer affirms that 'many have undertaken to write' a record of the events connected with the rise of Christianity we can assume that



he must have composed his work not only a considerable time after the tradition had ceased to be merely oral, but also after a good bit of experimental writing had already been done, so that his literary skill (of which he certainly possesses a good deal) is used to construct a well-ordered narrative perhaps rather in the Thucydidean manner, which will attract educated non-Christian readers, as well as catechumens.

Quotations in the works of early sub-apostolic Christian writers show that *most* of the books in our present New Testament were known and valued by someone or other at a fairly early date, though not perhaps in every case the same books, and never all the books. The writings of Clement of Rome, which may well belong to about A.D. 96, show quotations which claim to be sayings of Christ, but which are not necessarily from the present synoptic gospels. On the other hand, in the letters written by Ignatius of Antioch shortly before his execution, about the year A.D. 110, there are some quotations which show remarkable acquaintance with the thought and language of the fourth gospel. It may be that this latter document, which is so different from the other three, was composed at the close of the first century either in Ephesus or Alexandria by some Greek-speaking Christian who had access to a record at least as old as that edited in Mark, but belonging to a different cycle of oral tradition, perhaps put together or transmitted by an intimate follower of Jesus, the Palestinian Jew, Johanan bar Zebediah (John the son of Zebedee). If so, it may fall between the writings of Luke and the final form of 'Matthew'. The word 'Gospel' seems to be the usage of the earliest non-Biblical writers, and the phrase 'the memoirs which are called gospels' occurs in the writings of a Greek Christian about the middle of the second century.

The Pauline epistles seem to have been collected into one corpus somewhere about the same time (possibly *c.* A.D. 140), but even these show signs of being composite, especially II Corinthians and Philip-pians. Even if we cannot actually commit ourselves to Bishop Barnes's tentative reconstruction in all its details we must allow for something rather like it.

Towards the end of this first period we find that the practice is growing for individual areas to make lists of Christian books which

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they approve or value, but the lists are by no means uniform, nor does it necessarily mean that because a particular church valued a book enough to include it in its list, it therefore attributed to it the fullest inspired authority. Nevertheless the conception was steadily establishing itself that there was a body of Christian writings to which appeal could be made because it was believed to embody the apostolic tradition. The choice of such works was not by any means 'critical' in our sense of the word, because it was dependent largely upon whether the name of a well-known apostolic person was fixed to them.

*The second period, from A.D. 220 to 323*, is one of what we may call experimental canon-making. It involves, not the holding of councils to decide on such matters, but the work of Christian scholars like Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, who develop the idea of *standard Christian works*, embodying what is felt to be true and orthodox teaching (as it were the broad highway of Christian belief, having no peculiarities), and avoiding the strange and bizarre stories which figure in Christian apocryphal literature. Origen coins the phrase 'publicly circulated writings' (*dedēmosieumenai graphai*) and Eusebius divides the books into 'acknowledged', 'disputed', and 'spurious'. It is to be noted however that some of the lists show plainly that a number of books like the Shepherd of Hermas, which were eventually excluded, were for a time on the border-line, while some, like the Apocalypse of John, which eventually gained general acceptance, though at a rather late date, were for a considerable time disputed.

*The third period, that of the councils*, completes and ratifies the efforts made during the second stage, but even so it is not until we arrive at the acts of the Quinisextine Council, held in A.D. 691, that we get the books which are now included in our New Testament all synodically recognized for both East and West, while the Apocalypse was not accepted by the churches of Asia Minor until the close of the fourth century. The great teachers of Antioch up to well on in the fifth century did not receive the four epistles II John, III John, II Peter and Jude, and also the Apocalypse.

The main differences between this Christian corpus of sacred books and those of other religions are therefore: (i) that the so-called New Testament was partly in writing from the beginning, (ii) that the

period of exclusively oral tradition for the Christian part was very short, only a decade or two at the most,\* (iii) that the whole of it, both Old and New Testaments, is based upon a theory of Deity as the *Lord of History*, so that historical events have a cosmic significance, while the spatio-temporal order is not an endless series of cycles, but leads on to a climax which is *at the end of, but also beyond, history*. The kind of material to be found in the Bible therefore is rather unlike what is to be found in other sacred books.

(a) *Passages from the Synoptic Gospels*

*Mark ii. 1-12*

And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

When Jesus saw their faith he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

\* Though it clearly went on for a long time after and overlapped the age of gospel writing. Among non-literate communities of Christians, oral tradition indeed has never ceased to play an important part in their teaching, though of course after the first generation of Christians it could not be that of those referred to by Luke as *autoptai*, eyewitnesses.

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Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy)

I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

This is a typical piece of narrative, but it is narrative with a doctrinal assumption, namely that Jesus of Nazareth is 'He who should come', the Servant of the Lord who speaks in Isaiah lxi, and is spoken of in Isaiah xlii. Thus his actions in healing the paralytic and declaring forgiveness of sins are evidences of his identity. Mark may be our earliest written gospel, but even in Mark there is 'a gospel about Jesus', and there is no evidence that the oral tradition behind Mark was substantially different. It seems to date from the impression Jesus made upon his contemporaries from the very first. He was evidently no ordinary person, whatever may be thought about the edifice of doctrine which has been built upon that impression. The translation here given is from the Authorized Version, with a slight amendment of the text in verses 5 and 9.

The next three passages, from the Matthaean version of what is usually known as the Sermon on the Mount, are for reasons of space only recorded and not printed *in extenso*, i.e. Matthew v. 1-2; vi. 15-18; and vi. 24-34. It is well recognized that the Lucan version is different, in that it is split up into several separate sections, while the Lucan form of the Beatitudes is shorter and possibly earlier. Readers will find a useful commentary on these passages in Gore's *One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, made in this case by a Christian Jew (New Testament section, pp. 137-44). The student will see that the rendering in the Revised Version differs in certain verses from that in the old Authorized Version, which in these cases is faulty, especially in Matthew vi. 6 and 18, where the interpolation of the one word

'openly' has completely distorted the meaning of the original saying. In Matthew vi. 24-34 the words 'take no thought' should always be rendered 'be not anxious or fussy'.

(b) The next two passages give what may be called *the earliest record of the kerugma or preaching* of the first disciples of Jesus. It will be seen that the full humanity of Jesus is assumed – he is 'a man approved... among you', and it is also assumed that his life was admitted by all to have been beneficent (we read elsewhere, in Acts x. 38, 'he went about doing good'). But the main core of the Christian creed is also to be found here, i.e. Crucifixion followed by Power, Humiliation followed by Triumph.

*Acts ii. 22-4*

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by powers, and portents, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

*Acts ii. 32-6*

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

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(c) The next three passages represent *early attempts to define the cosmic significance of the historical Jesus*. The fact that the Christian Church agreed to include them in the canon suggests that they were thought to be reasonable interpretations and worthy of preservation and respect. Readers can again consult Gore's *Commentary* for notes on them.

#### *Philippians ii. 5-11*

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not a prize to be grasped at to be equal with God;

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a bond servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him the name which is above every name:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.\*

It is perhaps worth pointing out that the next two passages are linked together as the Epistle and Gospel for High Mass on Christmas Day in the Western Liturgy, and are retained as those for Christmas communion in the Reformed Anglican Prayer Book. That the emphasis is on the Incarnation rather than on the alleged mode of the Incarnation cannot be without significance.

#### *Hebrews i. 1-12*

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very

\* Translation from Authorized Version, slightly amended.

image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

Thou art my Son,

This day have I begotten thee?

and again,

I will be to him a Father,

And he shall be to me a Son?

And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith:

Who maketh his angels winds,

And his ministers a flame of fire:

but of the Son he saith,

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;

And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;

Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee

With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

And,

Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,

And the heavens are the works of thy hands:

They shall perish; but thou continuest:

And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

And as a mantle shall thou roll them up,

As a garment, and they shall be changed:

But thou art the same,

And thy years shall not fail.

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In this passage, the author of which is unknown, the word 'Son' is used instead of '*Logos*'. The reason probably is that the writer is addressing Jews, and is arguing that since Jesus is clearly the Divine Agent or Messiah, for whose coming they have long been waiting, He is therefore not a creature like one of the angelic beings, but Divine, having the status of God. The argument is supported by quotations from the Hebrew Psalms which would be accepted by his audience, and in which the Messiah is addressed as God, or God's Son. The passage in verse 6 is not to be found in the ordinary Bible, but comes from the LXX version of the Song of Moses in Deut. xxxii. 43. It is fine poetry, and appears to have appealed to Mohammed, who quotes it as showing that Adam was ordered to be worshipped by the angels, whereas here it is interpreted not of Adam but of the Messiah.

#### *John i. 1-14*

In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word (*Logos*) was with God, and the Word (*Logos*) was God [or 'Divine'].

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.  
And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness overcame it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man, coming into the world.

He entered into the world, the world which was made by him, yet the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But on as many as have accepted him, on them he has con-



ferred the right to become the children of God, even on those who believe in his name:

And they owe this birth of theirs not to human blood, nor to any impulse of the flesh, nor to the will of man, but to God.

And the Word (*Logos*) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The above passage is for this volume the most important, since 'Word' is a translation of the Greek word *Logos*. A contemporary reader would have seen the implication at once, since for the educated non-Christian public of that day *Logos* meant something definite, i.e. a Cosmic Power emanating from the Supreme and Ineffable God, His Agent in creation, the Instrument of His Providence, the Living Way by whom He speaks to the world. To say then (i) that the *Logos* is the True Light that lighteneth every man, (ii) that the *Logos* was incarnate in Jesus, is to relate all human spiritual activity to *one* centre, and this was what the Christians did.

(d) The next extract is perhaps *the most famous of all passages in the Pauline letters*. The word rendered 'charity' is, in Greek, *agapē*, and has an interesting history. As a noun it appears in biblical Greek almost as a novelty: there are only three recorded examples of it in pre-biblical Greek. In classical Greek it had a very weak meaning, perhaps 'preference', or 'tolerance', or something like that. It suddenly leaps into prominence in the New Testament literature, not as denoting physical and erotic love, which it does fifteen times in the LXX, but as standing for the supreme attribute of the Living God, whose self-giving spiritual Love for humanity and indeed for His whole creation is manifested and shed abroad in the life of Christ. Such being the character of the Creator, it is argued by Paul that *agapē* should be the dominant feature of everyone's life, and he bursts out into a kind of hymn in praise of it.

### *I. Corinthians xiii*

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

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And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, taketh not account of evil;

Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness but rejoiceth with the truth;

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but now I have become a man I have put away childish things.

For now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

The translation is from the Authorized Version, with a few necessary amendments. It seemed a pity to desert entirely a rendering which has become famous almost throughout the entire English-speaking world, but of course the word 'charity' must be read with its correct and not with its early-Victorian meaning. Some think that St Paul,

in speaking about giving the body to be burned, may have been referring to the case of a Hindu *yogi* who visited Athens and was a victim of self-destruction by burning, as an act of piety. Others, who think that the whole hymn is a later insertion and non-Pauline, see in it a reference to some early burning of Christian martyrs, such as occurred in the Neronian persecution.

I give here Moffatt's rendering of the foregoing passage, with the word *agapē* substituted for the English 'love' so as to help out the meaning:

I may speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but if I have no *agapē*, I am a noisy gong, or a clanging cymbal.

I may prophesy, fathom all mysteries and secret lore,

I may have such absolute faith that I can move hills from their place,

But if I have no *agapē* – I count for nothing.

I may distribute all I possess in charity,

I may give up my body to be burnt, but if I have no *agapē* I make nothing of it.

*Agape* is very patient, very kind. *Agapē* knows no jealousy; *agapē* makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; *agapē* is never glad when others go wrong, *agapē* is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient. *Agapē* never disappears. As for prophesying, it will be superseded; as for tongues, they will cease; as for secret lore, it will be superseded. For we only know bit by bit, and we only prophesy bit by bit; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will be superseded. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I argued like a child; now that I am a man, I am done with childish ways. At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror, but then it will be face to face; at present I am learning bit by bit, but then I shall understand, as all along I have myself been understood. And now, as they say, 'Faith and hope

and *agapē* last on, these three', but the greatest of these is *agapē*.

One need only add to this the consideration that in the first of the Johannine epistles (ch. iv) the writer completes the picture by sheer identification: 'God is *agapē*'.

(e) The final passage gives what may be described as *the last of the post-resurrection appearances and the first of the visions of the saints*. To the Christian prophet, isolated in a concentration camp on the Aegean island of Patmos, and engaged upon forced labour in its quarries, comes the realization of the complete identity between the Supreme Deity who is symbolized by the first and last letters of the alphabet (the All-Embracing) and the *Logos* incarnate in Jesus, who was crucified, but who is now risen and glorious.

*Revelation i. 8-18*

I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.

I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice which spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and

his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. (Cf. also Revelation xix.)

Since the last edition of this book, the New Testament portion of the New English Bible has appeared. Readers would do well to study this; and especially to look at the translations of the passages quoted above.

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## HELLENISTIC LITERATURE OUTSIDE THE BIBLE

We are aware in these days that the Christian movement did not emerge in the midst of a world that had no religious literature of its own other than that of the Jews. On the contrary there was a religious underworld of Hellenism which, even if it had no actual canonical writings, had scriptures of a sort which it valued, and on the basis of which it was trying to work its way to a purer and more profound personal religion. I have already spoken of the lost Orphic books. Although it would not be correct to speak of 'Stoic scriptures', the works of the Stoic philosophers were read and valued for religious quite as much as for philosophical purposes. Indeed one can derive a considerable amount of religion both from Plato and from Zeno and Cleanthes. It may well be that Indian influence coming through Egypt produced in the end a sort of Graeco-Oriental mystical piety, some of which was actually contemporaneous with the early Christian movement. Extensive extracts from Gentile literature are impossible, but a few outstanding passages demand inclusion. I have chosen three. The *first* is from a queer and obscure collection of documents called the Hermetic writings, which seem to have originated somewhere in the Egyptian Fayum in a community which to-day we might almost call theosophical. It is as though somebody had tried composing a series of Upanishads in Koinē Greek, near the shores of the Mediterranean.

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My *second* passage is really in origin pre-Christian, because its author was the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes, who died in 232 B.C. The point is however that Stoicism was a power in the Gentile world right up to the time of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus in the middle of the second century A.D. and was a genuine rival and alternative to Christianity. The hymn of Cleanthes was preserved because it was valued for its fine sentiments. Lightfoot called it: 'the noblest expression of heathen devotion which Greek literature has preserved to us.'\*

My *third* passage is from the voluminous writings of the Alexandrian Jew Philo. Philo is in many respects a boring writer, and not the least for his earnest efforts to allegorize everything that he finds in the Hebrew Scriptures, so as to give a spiritual meaning to the most trivial detail. But he is important because he shows us how the allegorizing method of Alexandrian scholars, which the Greeks applied to their own myths, was capable of being diverted by an ingenious Jew to the extraction of new meanings out of such unpromising material as Leviticus. This showed a way which was afterwards followed up by some Christians, with rather dubious results, as may be seen in the so-called Epistle of Barnabas.

My *fourth* passage is from a curious pseudo-Christian mystical work, referred to in Ch. xi of my *Comparative Religion*.

#### (i) *A hymn which concludes one of the Hermetic documents*

After a course of instruction rather in the Upanishadic manner, the author concludes as follows. We have already noticed that Upanishads sometimes end in the same way, with a paean of praise to the Deity.

*Hermetica* I, 31-2

I will give praise unto the Father God with all my soul and with all my strength.

\* For further information regarding the relation between Stoicism and early Christianity, readers may be referred to Dr C. H. Dodd's lectures recently delivered in the United States: *The Gospel and the Law*; and (if they read German) to the excellent work by Dr Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

Holy is God, the Father of all:

Holy is God, whose will is fulfilled by His own powers:

Holy is God, who willeth to be known, and is known of  
His own:

Holy art Thou, who holdest all things together by the  
Word:

Holy art Thou, of whom every creaturely image hath been  
born:

Holy art Thou, whom the creaturely did not shape:

Holy art Thou, who art stronger than every power:

Holy art Thou, who art greater than every excellence:

Holy art Thou, who art superior to all things that are  
approved.\*

O Thou who art ineffable, a mystery not to be divulged, to be addressed in silence, Receive a spotless and reasonable sacrifice, offered unto Thee from the mind and heart. Incline Thyself to me, beseeching Thee that I may not fail in the knowledge of that which concerneth our being, and strengthen me, filling me with such grace as may enable me to give light to them that are in the shades of ignorance concerning their parentage, even those who are my brethren, and sons of Thine.

The language resembles that which we associate with the Johannine literature; but we must be careful not to exaggerate the similarities. As Professor Dodd has summed it up: 'When we come out of the first-century world to the New Testament... we are struck most powerfully by its difference from anything else in that world. In spite of its similarities of language, it possesses a distinctive quality, and its contents are an impressive witness that a new factor, both intellectual and spiritual, has appeared on the scene.'

\* Translation by A. C. B.

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(ii) *The Hymn of Cleanthes*

O God most glorious, called by many a name,  
Nature's great King, through endless years the same;  
Omnipotence, who by thy just decree  
Controllest all, hail Zeus! for unto thee  
Behoves all creatures in all lands to call.  
We are thy children, we alone, of all  
On earth's broad ways that wander to and fro,  
Bearing thine image wheresoe'er we go.  
Wherefore with songs of praise thy power I will forth  
show,  
Lo! yonder heaven, that round the earth is wheeled,  
Follows thy guidance, still to thee doth yield  
Glad homage; thine unconquerable hand  
That flaming minister, the levin-brand  
Wieldeth, a sword two-edged, whose deathless might  
Pulsates through all that nature brings to light;  
Vehicle of the universal Word, that flows  
Through all, and in the light celestial glows  
Of stars both great and small. O King of Kings  
Through countless ages, God! whose purpose brings  
To birth whate'er on land or in the sea  
Is wrought, or in high heaven's immensity;  
Save what the sinner works infatuate.  
Nay, but thou knowest to make crooked straight;  
Chaos to thee is order; in thine eyes  
The unloved is lovely, who didst harmonize  
Things evil with things good, that there should be  
One Word through all things everlastingly.  
One Word – whose voice, alas! the wicked spurn.  
Insatiate for the good their spirits yearn.  
Yet seeing see not, neither hearing hear  
God's universal law, which those revere



By reason guided, happiness who win.  
 The rest unreasoning diverse shapes of sin  
 Self-prompted follow; for an idle name  
 Vainly they wrestle in the lists of fame.  
 Others inordinately riches woo,  
 Or, dissolute, the joys of flesh pursue.  
 Now here, now there, they wander, fruitless still  
 For ever seeking good and finding ill.  
 Zeus the all-bountiful whom darkness shrouds.  
 Whose lightning lightens in the thunder-clouds.  
 Thy children save from error's deadly sway;  
 Turn thou the darkness from their souls away!  
 Vouchsafe them unto knowledge to attain;  
 For thou by knowledge art made strong to reign  
 O'er all, and all things rulest righteously;  
 So, by thee honoured, we will honour thee,  
 Praising thy works continually with songs,  
 As mortals should; nor higher meed belongs  
 E'en to the Gods, than justly to adore  
 The universal law for evermore.

(iii) *Philo*

The lengthy commentaries of this Alexandrian Jew can hardly be called sacred books in the sense of canonical. My only excuse therefore for including some extracts from them here is that they illustrate in a curious way not only the manner in which the religious Hellenistic world contemporary with the New Testament expressed itself, but also the sort of thing which it was possible for a Hellenized Jew to say about the scriptures of his own nation.

1. *Treatment of Genesis* (ii. 2)

It is quite foolish to think that the world was created in six days, or in a space of time at all. Why? Because every period

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of time is a series of days and nights, and these can be only made by the movement of the sun as it goes over and under the earth: but the sun is a part of heaven, so that time is confessedly more recent than the world. It would therefore be correct to say that the world was not made in time, but that time was formed by means of the world, for it was Heaven's movement that was the index of the nature of time. When, then, Moses says 'He finished his work on the sixth day' we must understand him to be adducing not a quantity of days but a perfect number, namely six. ... He makes mortal things parallel with the number six, the happy and blessed things with the number seven.... God never leaves off making, but even as it is the property of fire to burn and of snow to chill, so it is the property of God to make: nay more so by far, since He is to all besides the source of action.... Excellently moreover does Moses say 'caused to rest', not 'rested'; for he causes to rest that which, though actually not in operation, is apparently making, but He Himself never ceases to rest.... For whereas things produced by human arts when finished stand still and remain as they are, the products of Divine skill, when completed, begin again to move.

(I present the above passage for the consideration of Dr Fred Hoyle.)

#### 2. *Two passages showing the treatment of the idea of the Logos or Word of God*

(a) ... The Creator, we know, employed for the making of the world no pattern taken from among created things, but solely, as I have said, His own Word (*Logos*) or Reason. It is on this account that he says that man was made a likeness and imitation of the Word, when the Divine Breath was breathed into his face.

(b) He (the seer) has been trained ... to look stedfastly for the manna which is the *Logos* of God, the heavenly

incorruptible food of the soul which delights in the vision....

(The *Logos* is thus the Divine Agent in Creation, and also the daily Bread from Heaven whereby man's spiritual life is fed.)

(iv) *Dionysius the Areopagite*

The four works bearing the name of the above can hardly be described as canonical books in the strict sense of the word, nor are they usually included in the Apocrypha of the New Testament.\* The tradition that they were composed by a disciple of St Paul who was actually the first bishop of Athens, though no longer tenable, was widely credited in uncritical ages, and gave an air of respectable orthodoxy to compositions which would otherwise have been suspected of heresy. It is now generally accepted that the Levantine Christian who wrote them derived a large part of his material from the heathen neo-Platonist teacher Proclus, who was lecturing at Athens in A.D. 430. He cannot therefore himself be earlier in date than that. The following short extract from *The Divine Names* will show the sort of jargon which he uses, and also the extent to which he approximates to the Upanishadic doctrine of *neti neti*, 'it is not, it is not', which declares that Deity is to be known only by *negation*. It should be remembered that pseudo-Dionysius became familiar to the Western Europeans in the ninth century through a Latin translation made by an Irish scholar, though he was studied earlier in the Greek Church, where a commentary was written on him in the seventh century. One can only wonder whatever would have happened if his works, like the Apocalypse, had eventually come to be included in the canon. Even without such authorization his influence in the medieval cloister and among the hermits must have been considerable, and writers like Mr Aldous Huxley would like to see him taken more seriously at the present time.

For even as things which are intellectually discerned cannot be comprehended or perceived by means of those things which

\* Montagu James briefly refers to them in the Introduction to his book, p. xxv.

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belong to the senses, nor simple and imageless things by means of types and images, nor the formless and intangible essence of unembodied things by means of those which have bodily form, by the same law of truth the boundless Super-Essence surpasses Essences, the Super-Intellectual Unity surpasses Intelligences, the One which is beyond thought surpasses the apprehension of thought, and the Good which is beyond utterance surpasses the reach of words. Yea, it is a Unity which is the unifying Source of all unity and a Super-Essential Essence, a Mind beyond the reach of mind and a Word beyond utterance, eluding Discourse, Intuition, Name, and every kind of being. It is the Universal Cause of existence while Itself existing not, for It is beyond all Being and such that It alone could give, with proper understanding thereof, a revelation of Itself.

Now concerning this hidden Super-Essential Godhead we must not dare, as I have said, to speak, or even to form any conception Thereof, except those things which are divinely revealed to us from the Holy Scriptures. For as It hath lovingly taught us in the Scriptures concerning Itself, the understanding and contemplation of Its actual nature is not accessible to any being; for such knowledge is super-essentially exalted above them all. And many of the Sacred Writers thou wilt find who have declared that It is not only invisible and incomprehensible, but also unsearchable and past finding out, since there is no trace of any that have penetrated the hidden depths of Its infinitude. Not that the Good is wholly incommunicable to anything; nay, rather, while dwelling alone by Itself, and having there firmly fixed Its super-essential Ray, It lovingly reveals Itself by illuminations corresponding to each separate creature's powers, and thus draws upwards holy minds into such contemplation, participation and resemblance of Itself as they can attain – even them that holily and duly strive thereafter and do not seek with impotent presumption the Mystery

beyond that heavenly revelation which is so granted as to fit their powers, nor yet through their lower propensity slip down the steep descent, but with unwavering constancy press onwards toward the ray that casts its light upon them and, through the love responsive to these gracious illuminations, speed their temperate and holy flight on the wings of a godly reverence.

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### HINDU LITERATURE SHOWING DEVOTION TO A PERSONAL GOD

We now approach some of the most remarkable productions in the history of religion outside the sphere of Christianity.

The reaction against an impersonal monism, which I have elsewhere described,\* led in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era to a devotion of an emotional rather than intellectual character directed towards a conception of deity of a personal nature. With the causes of this reaction I am not here concerned, as I have tried to discuss them in another book. Here my purpose is to show the manner in which this devotion expressed itself in a long series of compositions, beginning approximately about the fourth century B.C., but extending almost up to our own day.

Somewhere in the region of 400 B.C. a poet called Valmiki put into verse an ancient folk-tale about an ideally good king called Rama. In the first instance this king was quite frankly a human being, with nothing of the supernatural about him. But it is evident that as soon as the incarnational reaction set in, it became easy and appropriate to identify Rama with one of the avatars of the god Vishnu, and in this way to crown his virtue by attributing it to divine agency. Thus the epic of Valmiki came to have not merely a cultural but also a deep religious significance, and the *Ramayana*, already a cherished possession of the Indian people and an idealized picture of a golden past,

\* See my *Comparative Religion*, pp. 134-48.

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was read as the story of how the divine and beneficent Vishnu came down and was incarnate for the love of human beings. Hence many translations of the original epic were made, and much later, in the sixteenth century A.D., a religious poet, Tulsi Das, rendered it freely into Hindi, his version bearing perhaps somewhat the same relation to Valmiki's epic that the Fourth Gospel bears to the Synoptic Gospels. All these different versions of the *Ramayana* are treated with reverence by Indians, and although not strictly *śruti* but *smṛiti*, are read with simple piety, and contribute to the moulding of character.

Our three first extracts in this section then are (a) from the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, (b) from the *Ramayana* of Tulsi Das.

#### (i) *The Ramayana*

In the development of this epic poem from one version to another there is obviously doctrinal development as well. Romesh Dutt's well-known translation is of course an abridgement of the vast original. The earliest English rendering of the whole text, by the Baptist missionaries Carey and Marshman, was made in the years 1806-10, from Valmiki's original, which in itself is based upon earlier sagas. The *Ramayana* of Tulsi Das, composed in A.D. 1532, is practically a new epic, and in any case its treatment of the person of Rama is no longer humanistic, but is surrounded with myth, and enhanced by doctrinal passages which amount to what may even be called a 'Ramology'.

I give below, first a passage from the first canto of Valmiki's poem, as translated by Dutt, showing the kind of trochaic (*śloka*) metre in which the original is written; and secondly, two prose passages from Tulsi Das, which show how theological is its treatment of the hero. My fourth passage is from a verse translation of the poem of Tulsi Das, which shows not only the doctrinal enhancement of the Rama story, but again the use of the *śloka* metre. This poem, although actually *smṛiti* and not strictly canonical, is beloved by thousands of Hindus, and is read by the pious laity and expounded by their divines, much as our Christian gospels are expounded in village churches and chapels.

(a) *From Valmiki's Ramayana*

Here Rama is referred to as being quite distinct from the gods, and the main theme is his filial piety, coupled with his perfect married life with Sita, who is the ideal of wifely virtue.

Rama with a pious duty, – favoured by the Gods above, –  
Tended still his ancient father with a never faltering love,  
In his father's sacred mandate still his noblest duty saw,  
In the weal of subject nations recognized his foremost law.

And he pleased his happy mother with a fond and filial care,  
And his elders and his kinsmen with devotion soft and fair,  
Brahmans blessed the righteous Rama for his faith in gods  
above,

People in the town and hamlet blessed him with their loyal  
love.

With a woman's whole affection fond and trusting Sita  
loved,  
And within her faithful bosom loving Rama lived and  
moved.

And he loved her, for their parents chose her as his faithful  
wife,  
Loved her for her peerless beauty, for her true and trustful  
life,

Loved and dwelt within her bosom, though he wore a form  
apart,

Rama in a sweet communion lived in Sita's loving heart.

(b) *From the Ramayana of Tulsi Das, Canto I, Doha 17*

It will be seen at once that this is an entirely different production from Valmiki's. All the naïve epic narrative has disappeared, and we are confronted with a sophisticated piece of theology in verse, quite as artificial as Milton's *Paradise Lost*. This and the extract immediately following are in prose version. The third extract is in metre.

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All know that the greatness of the Lord is beyond words. Yet who can resist the attempt to express it in language? One God there is, without passions and without form, Self-Existent; He is the Universal Soul, the Supreme Spirit, the All-Pervading, of whom this world is but the shadow. He hath become incarnate, and hath wrought manifold works out of pure love for them that believe on Him. He is All-Gracious and Full of Compassion towards them that are lowly of heart, and in His Mercy He putteth away His wrath towards them that love Him, and whom He knoweth as His own. He, the Lord Raghuraj, healeth old injuries, protecteth the poor, and is beneficent to all. In this faith sing the sages the praise of Hari, and thus their song becometh holy and serviceable. Thus even I, who bow myself before the feet of Rama, feel courage to set forth his glory.

#### *Canto I, Doha 30: Exaltation of the Name of Rama*

In all four corners of the world, in all ages, past, present and future, in all three parts of the universe, heaven, earth and hell – will every creature be blest that calleth on the name of Rama. This is the meaning of the Vedas, of the Puranas, and of all Holy Scripture, that love toward Rama is the fruit of all virtue. In the first age the means of atonement [or propitiation] was by contemplation, in the second by sacrifice, in the third by temple-worship. But in this present miserable and corrupt age, wherein the soul of man swimmeth like a fish in the ocean of sin, in this time of danger, the Name of Rama is as the one and only Tree of Life, and to meditate thereon is to find solace from all unrest. In this age of wickedness, neither good works, nor the profession of faith, nor spiritual wisdom hath any worth, save only the Name of Rama. His Name is as the wisdom and might of Hanuman, powerful to put to flight the armies of the wicked ones.



- (c) *From a verse translation of the Ramayana of Tulsi Das, Canto I, Chandha 2\**

Siva is represented as saying to his consort:

Seers and sages, saints and hermits, fix on Him their reverent  
gaze,

And in faint and trembling accents, holy scripture hymns  
His praise.

He the omnipresent spirit, lord of heaven and earth and hell,  
To redeem His people, freely has vouchsafed with men to  
dwell.

This quatrain is taken from the fine translation of the *Ramayana* of Tulsi Das by the Oxford scholar F. S. Growse. Most of his work however is in prose, and he only uses metre to indicate certain speeches by Siva and Brahma. The passage given above might almost come out of a Christmas hymn in a Christian hymnbook. If however we examine the context in which it occurs we find this to be plainly polytheistic. The status of Rama is really very obscure, since the speaker in this case is actually another god in the Hindu pantheon, none other than Siva. In a later canto Siva repeats similar doctrine, which is this time given by Growse in a prose translation:

Listen, O daughter of the mountain king, and the sun of  
my words shall disperse all the mists from your soul. There is  
no difference between the material and the immaterial... the  
Formless, Invisible and Uncreated Immortal, out of love for  
the faithful, becomes materialized. How can this be? In the

\* It may be objected by some that this later *Ramayana* as well as much of the Indian *bhakti* literature should be treated as post-biblical. Chronologically this may be the case, but it is not yet established that the Indian literature of the 'incarnation-period' is the result of culture-contact between Hindus and Christians. The resemblances are strange, but borrowing or hybridization cannot be proved, as it can in the case of the Hindu-Moslem literature of the Sikhs. It remains doubtful therefore whether the literature of the earlier *bhakti* is not an independent product of religious genius, and it may be that the affinities with Christian literature which it shows come from some area between India and Palestine which has influenced the form of expression of religious ideas both eastward and westward.

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same way as water is crystallized into ice ... Listen, Girija, to the grateful tale of Hari's great and holy acts, as they have been recorded in the scriptures. The cause of Hari's incarnation is not to be dogmatically defined, for to my mind, Bhavani, Rama is beyond the grasp of intellect, soul, or speech, yet as saints and sages, the Veda and the Puranas have part y and to the extent of their capacity explained the matter, so, I, fair dame, will now declare to you the cause as I understand it. Whenever virtue decays, and evil spirits, waxing strong in pride, work iniquity that cannot be told, to the confusion of Brahmans, cows, gods,\* and earth itself, the compassionate Lord assumes some new bodily form, relieves the distress of the faithful, destroys the evil spirits, reinstates the gods, maintains the way of salvation, and diffuses the brightness of his glory throughout the world. Such are the motives of Rama's incarnations.

#### (ii) *The Mahabharata and the Bhagavadgita*

The second great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*, may be compared to the *Iliad* of Homer, in that it is the account of a war between two armed alliances, the Pandavas and the Kurus. It is in fact not a religious work in the strict sense of the word. It contains however a number of

\* The reader is no doubt puzzled by the order: Brahmins, cows, gods. Only a Hindu can understand the apparent absurdity. Brahmins are themselves more or less supernatural beings, cows are venerated from the remotest proto-Dravidian antiquity as supernatural creatures, while the word 'gods' may mean, as it does sometimes in Egypt, simply 'rulers'.

The full story of the *Ramayana* cannot be unfolded here, but it is referred to in *Comparative Religion* (p. 138), in my textbook on *Hinduism* (pp. 80ff.), and at considerable length in Dr Cave's *Redemption, Hindu and Christian* (op. 119f.).

I note that Sir George Grierson (in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, ii. 418) says that Tulsi Das was the first Hindu to teach that Deity was *δυνάμενος συμπαθεῖναι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν*, 'able to sympathize with our infirmities', a belief, he adds, which is usually considered to be peculiar to Christianity. He ascribes this to the influence of Nestorian missions. This, like the alleged origin of the quasis Christian atmosphere of some late Saivite hymns, is almost impossible to prove, but cannot be ruled out.

interpolations in the form of didactic poems, which are concerned with religious teaching. The chief of these is what is known, to give it its full title, as the *Bhagavadgita-upanishadah*, or 'The secret doctrines delivered by the Exalted Lord'. It is therefore, as will be seen, a comparatively late Upanishad, and it seems unlikely that it formed part of the original *Mahabharata*. Probably no religious book in the world other than the Bible and the Qur'ân has attained such publicity as the *Gita*, to give it the short title by which it is usually known. It comprises eighteen divisions, each with about forty or fifty verses, and in one sense it is a kind of compendium of Upanishadic teaching. Yet as such it belongs to a twofold reaction:

(i) It is theistic, and in spite of its comprehensiveness, on the whole favours the rise of the new Vaishnavism, with its emphasis upon the doctrine of *avatars*.

(ii) It is post-Buddhist, and professes to furnish a defence of the way of the *kshatriya* or warrior against the uncompromising pacifism of Gautama.

Perhaps for both these reasons it has been regarded by rigorist Hindus as *smṛiti* and not *śruti*, and I have been told that very strict Brahmin theologians will not accept it as canonical.

As to date, it is placed by Radhakrishnan in the fifth century B.C., and this would make it in his opinion prior to the formation of systematic philosophies of India like that of the Vedanta. But Otto would not assent to this hard-and-fast dating, and many will doubtless agree with him that the text of the *Gita* has undergone much revision and expansion, not to say interpolation. Farquhar writes that it is probably an old verse Upanishad, written or composed rather later than the *Śvetasvatara*, and worked up to its present form as part of the great *Mahabharata* epic, in the interests of Krishnaism, by some Vaishnavite treatise on *yoga* which was composed about 200 B.C., but which got mixed up first with the Krishna-Vasudeva cult, and then, by the identification of Krishna with an *avatar* of Vishnu, also became adjusted to the Vedic literature proper. Hopkins, Holtzmann, and Keith all see in it the Vaishnavising of an older tradition, though E. J. Thomas sees no reason why it should not be all by one hand. Otto thinks that the original *Gita* was a short episode in the epic, and

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that the doctrinal matter is all of it interpolation. Although it is *smṛiti*, the *Gita* has for centuries been recognized as close to the main Upanishadic corpus in authority, but this seems to be due in part to a confusion of thought. The most ancient commentary on it is by a pundit who is called Sankara (A.D. 788–820), but it has been maintained that this is not the great Sankara, and that it was another person of the same name who wrote the commentary, so that the attribution of the exegetical work to the great Sankara has given the *Gita* actually a more august authority than it deserves.

About 150 years ago the *Gita* was held in less esteem than it is today. Indeed at the time when the British entered India it was not the Krishna of the *Gita* who was revered, so much as the lewd and lascivious Krishna of the Puranas, the frolicsome and lustful fertility-god. But during the last half-century, largely owing to the influence of such men as Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghosh, and Radakrishnan, the *Gita* has steadily increased in favour, and devout Hindus now regard it with something of the fervour and reverence which Christians accord to the Gospels, and especially to the Fourth Gospel with its last discourses. It has attracted the attention of many scholars and translators, and I give below in a footnote a list of the principal editions.\*

Perhaps the chief importance of the *Gita* lies in the fact that it marks the establishment of a kind of permanent compromise between those Indians who desired to retain the belief in a Personal God who could

\* For further details about the *Bhagavadgita* the reader may be referred to my *Comparative Religion* (pp. 137ff.), and also to my *Hinduism* (pp. 82ff.). Among the many translations of the *Gita* may be mentioned the following:

Dr L. D. Barnett.

Mr W. D. P. Hill of King's College, Cambridge, 1928.

Dr E. J. Thomas (in the 'Wisdom of the East Series').

Professor Rudolf Otto: *The Original Gita*, 1939.

Professor Franklin Edgerton, Cambridge, Mass., 1944 (a good scholarly edition, with introduction, text, prose translation, and reprint of Sir Edwin Arnold's fine verse rendering).

Swami Nikhilananda, New York, 1944.

Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, Los Angeles, 1944.

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, 1945, with commentary.

Dr Sarvepalli Radakrishnan (text and full devotional commentary), 1948.

be an adored Friend, and those who still held to the higher Brahminism with its conception of an Impersonal and all-pervading Absolute – a compromise which has endured to the present day.

The foregoing remarks justify, I hope, the inclusion in this work of rather unusually long extracts from the *Gita*. The *first* of these, from *Chapter II*, applies the standard Upanishadic principle of the One Atman to the problem of military vocation. If the *Kshatriya* finds himself shrinking from killing other human beings, because it seems to him contrary to the principles of *ahimsa*, what is he to do? – Krishna here, under the *avatar* of a royal charioteer, gives the divine answer. If Shaw, in *Man and Superman*, had made Mr Henry Straker deliver a long speech to the hero, purporting to be a revelation from the Life-Force on the proper relations between man and woman, the situation would have been somewhat similar.

The *second* passage, from *Chapter IV*, is one of the most important in the whole poem. Krishna expounds the doctrine of divine *avatars* as discontinuous action for philanthropic purposes on the part of the Deity. He then goes on to expound the doctrine of 'detachment', or 'inaction in action', which is found in many other mystical writings, and may have been originally diffused from one source. Finally he declares the philosophy of spiritual sacrifice. This again may have diffused from one centre, or conversely may have developed simultaneously in different separated areas.

The *third* passage, from *Chapter VI*, is the celebrated treatise on *yoga*, giving the main features in its physical technique. We may remember what a *yogi* once said to Miss Tillyard: 'One steps into one's *asana* (the term for a yogic posture) even as a tired man steps into his warm bath.'

The *fourth* passage, from *Chapter XI*, is the ecstatic utterance of the hero, Arjuna (or *Dhananjaya*, as he is here called), in the face of the terrific theophany of Krishna. Vishnu, hitherto appearing in the lowly incognito of a charioteer, suddenly manifests himself in his divine glory. The strangest thing about this revelation however is that the beneficent and kindly deity appears more in the guise of Siva, the ruthless and dangerous god of tropical nature. It is plain that there is overlapping here. We shall see presently that even Siva can be addressed in hymns which speak of his intense and gracious love for

the individual, while the Vishnu who elsewhere says to his devotee: 'Thou art most dear to Me', here reveals himself as a monster with many teeth and wide-open jaws, devouring the slain on the battle-field like so many moths sucked into a flame. The problem of 'nature red in tooth and claw with ravin' is presented to us, but it is not solved any more than the problem of the suffering of the righteous is solved by the equally terrific theophany of Yahveh at the close of the Book of Job. Such theophanies overwhelm with numinous awe, but we feel that they are in a different category from that of the still small voice which came to Elijah, and from that depicted in the hymn: 'When I survey the wondrous Cross'. I am not concerned here with questions about which is the most complete truth. I merely point out that the theophanies are very different ones. It would be right, I think, to point out that the theophanies in the last book of the Bible are nearer to the *Gita* theophany than some others in the New Testament.

The translations here are from the edition of the *Gita* by Professor Franklin Edgerton. Readers may like to look up what Principal Sydney Cave has to say about the poem in his book, *Redemption, Hindu and Christian*, Chapter V.

It has sometimes been said that the *Gita* in itself is incapable of inspiring and maintaining a high ethical and spiritual standard, because it is a work of the imagination, rather than the product of a historical career, but it is clear that it does build a type of character which is neither ignoble nor deficient in unworldly enthusiasm. Perhaps this character is best summed up in the words of a Vaishnavite hymn which is said to have been a great favourite with Mahatma Gandhi:

He is the true Vaishnava who knows and feels another's  
woes as his own.

Ever ready to serve, he never boasts.

He bows to everyone, and despises no one, keeping his  
thought, word, and deed pure.

Blessed is the mother of such an one. He reverences every  
woman as his mother.

He keeps an equal mind and does not stain his lips with  
falsehood; nor does he touch another's wealth.  
No bonds of attachment can hold him.  
Ever in tune with Ramanama, his body possesses in itself all  
places of pilgrimage.  
Free from greed and deceit, passion and anger, this is the  
true Vaishnava.

I do not know the origin of this hymn, but it is difficult not to think  
that it was the composition of one who had known the sayings of the  
Moslem heretic al-Hallaj, and perhaps some Christian writings as well.

*Chapter II, 16-26*

Of what is not, no coming to be occurs;  
No coming not to be occurs of what is  
But the dividing-line of both is seen,  
Of these two, by those who see the truth.

But know that that is indestructible,  
By which this all is pervaded;  
Destruction of this imperishable one  
No one can cause.\*

These bodies come to an end,  
It is declared, of the eternal embodied [soul],  
Which is indestructible and unfathomable.  
Therefore fight, son of Bharata!

Who believes him a slayer,  
And who thinks him slain,  
Both these understand not:  
He slays not, is not slain.

\* Cf. Emily Brontë's 'No coward soul is mine'. I do not think there is any  
evidence that she knew the *Gita*. Yet her whole poem could be endorsed by a Hindu.

### PART THREE

He is not born, nor does he ever die;  
Nor, having come to be, will he ever more come  
not to be.

Unborn, eternal, everlasting, this ancient one  
Is not slain when the body is slain.

Who knows as indestructible and eternal  
This unborn, imperishable one,  
That man, son of Prthā, how  
Can he slay or cause to slay – whom?

As leaving aside worn-out garments  
A man takes other, new ones,  
So leaving aside worn-out bodies  
To other, new ones goes the embodied [soul].

Swords cut him not,  
Fire burns him not,  
Water wets him not,  
Wind dries him not.

Not to be cut is he, not to be burnt is he,  
Not to be wet nor yet dried;  
Eternal, omnipresent, fixed,  
Immovable, everlasting is he.

Unmanifest he, unthinkable he,  
Unchangeable he is declared to be;  
Therefore knowing him thus  
Thou shouldst not mourn him.

Moreover, even if constantly born  
Or constantly dying thou considerest him,  
Even so, great-armed one, thou  
Shouldst not mourn him.



*Chapter IV, 5-11, 16-21, 24-33*

For Me have passed many  
Births, and for thee, Arjuna;  
These I know all;  
Thou knowest not, scorcher of the foe.

Though unborn, though My self is eternal,  
Though Lord of Beings,  
Resorting to My own material nature  
I come into being by My own mysterious power.

For whenever of the right  
A languishing appears, son of Bharata,  
A rising up of unright,  
Then I send Myself forth.

For protection of the good,  
And for destruction of evil-doers,  
To make a firm footing for the right,  
I come into being in age after age.

My wondrous birth and actions  
Whoso knows thus as they truly are,  
On leaving the body, to rebirth  
He goes not; to Me he goes, Arjuna

Rid of passion, fear and wrath,  
Made of Me, taking refuge in Me,  
Many by the austerity of knowledge  
Purified, have come to My estate.

In whatsoever way any come to Me,  
In that same way I grant them favour.  
My path follow  
Men altogether, son of Prthā....

### PART THREE

What is action, what inaction?

About this even sages are bewildered.

So I shall explain action to thee,

Knowing which, thou shalt be freed from evil.

For one must understand the nature of action, on the one hand,

And must understand the nature of mis-action,

And must understand the nature of inaction:

Hard to penetrate is the course of action.

Who sees inaction in action,

And action in inaction,

He is enlightened among men;

He does all actions, disciplined.

All whose undertakings

Are free from desire and purpose,

His actions burnt up in the fire of knowledge,

Him the wise call the man of learning.

Abandoning attachment to the fruits of action,

Constantly content, independent,

Even when he sets out upon action,

He yet does [in effect] nothing whatsoever.

Free from wishes, with mind and soul restrained,

Abandoning all possessions,

Action with the body alone

Performing, he attains no guilt....

The [sacrificial] presentation is Brahman; Brahman is the oblation;

In the [sacrificial] fire of Brahman it is poured by Brahman;

Just to Brahman must he go,

Being concentrated upon the [sacrificial] action that is Brahman.

To naught by sacrifice to the deities some  
Disciplined men devote themselves.  
In the [sacrificial] fire of Brahman, others the sacrifice  
Offer up by the sacrifice itself.

The senses, hearing and the rest, others  
Offer up in the fires of restraint;  
The objects of sense, sound and the rest, others  
Offer up in the fires of the senses.

All actions of the senses  
And actions of breath, others  
In the fire of the discipline of control of self  
Offer up, when it has been kindled by knowledge.

Sacrificers with substance, sacrificers with austerities,  
Sacrificers with discipline likewise are others,  
And sacrificers with study of the Sacred word and with  
knowledge,  
Religious men, with strict vows.

In the nether life-breath the upper life-breath offer up  
Others, likewise the nether in the upper life-breath,  
Checking the courses of the upper and nether life-breaths,  
Intent upon restraint of breath.

Others restrict their food and [so]  
Offer up the life-breaths in the life-breaths.  
All these know what sacrifice is,  
And their sins are destroyed by sacrifice.

Those who eat the nectar of the leavings of the sacrifice  
Go to the eternal Brahman.  
Not [even] this world is for him who does not sacrifice;  
How then the next, O best of Kurus?

### PART THREE

Thus many kinds of sacrifice  
Are spread out in the face of Brahman.  
Know that they all spring from action!  
Knowing this thou shalt be freed.

Better than sacrifice that consists of substance  
Is the sacrifice of knowledge, scorcher of the foe.  
All action without remainder, son of Prthā,  
Is completely ended in knowledge.

#### *Chapter VI, 10-19*

Let the disciplined man ever discipline  
Himself, abiding in a secret place,  
Solitary, restraining his thoughts and soul,  
Free from aspirations and without possessions.

In a clean place establishing  
A steady seat for himself,  
That is neither too high nor too low,  
Covered with a cloth, a skin, and kuśa-grass,

There fixing the thought-organ on a single object,  
Restraining the activity of his mind and senses,  
Sitting on the seat, let him practise  
Discipline unto self-purification.

Even body, head, and neck  
Holding motionless, [keeping himself] steady,  
Gazing at the tip of his own nose,  
And not looking in any direction,

With tranquil soul, rid of fear,  
Abiding in the vow of chastity,  
Controlling the mind, his thoughts on Me,  
Let him sit disciplined, absorbed in Me.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

Thus ever disciplining himself,  
The man of discipline, with controlled mind,  
To peace that culminates in nirvāṇa,  
And rests in Me, attains.

But he who eats too much has no discipline,  
Nor he who eats not at all;  
Neither he who is over-given to sleep,  
Nor yet who is [ever] wakeful, Arjuna.

Who is disciplined [moderate] in food and recreation,  
And has disciplined activity in words,  
And is disciplined in both sleep and wakefulness,  
To him belongs discipline that bans misery.

When the thought, controlled,  
Settles on the self alone,  
The man free from longing for all desires  
Is then called disciplined.

As a lamp stationed in a windless place  
Flickers not, this image is recorded  
Of the disciplined man controlled in thought,  
Practising discipline of the self.

### *Chapter XI, 9, 14-31*

Thus speaking then, O king,  
Hari [Viṣṇu], the Great Lord of Mystic Power,  
Showed unto the son of Prthā  
His supernal form as Good:...

Then filled with amazement,  
His hair standing upright, Dhanamjaya  
Bowed with his head to the God,  
And said with gesture of reverence:

PART THREE

I see the gods in Thy body, O God,  
All of them, and the hosts of various kinds of beings too,  
Lord Brahmā sitting on the lotus-seat,  
And the seers all, and the divine serpents.

With many arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes,  
I see Thee, infinite in form on all sides;  
No end nor middle nor yet beginning of Thee  
Do I see, O All-God, All-formed!

With diadem club, and disc,  
A mass of radiance, glowing on all sides,  
I see Thee, hard to look at, on every side  
With the glory of flaming fire and sun, immeasurable.

Thou art the Imperishable, the supreme Object of Knowledge;

Thou art the ultimate resting-place of this universe;  
Thou art the immortal guardian of the eternal right,  
Thou art the everlasting Spirit, I hold.

Without beginning, middle or end, of infinite power,  
Of infinite arms, whose eyes are the moon and sun,  
I see Thee, whose face is flaming fire,  
Burning this whole universe with Thy radiance.

For this region between heaven and earth  
Is pervaded by Thee alone, and all the directions;  
Seeing this Thy wondrous, terrible form,  
The triple world trembles, O exalted one!

For into Thee are entering yonder throngs of gods;  
Some, affrighted, praise Thee with reverent gestures;  
Crying 'Hail!' the throngs of the great seers and perfected  
ones  
Praise Thee with abundant laudations.

The Rudras, the Ādityas, the Vasus, and the Sādhyas,  
All-gods, Aśvins, Maruts, and the Steam-drinkers  
[‘fathers’],

The hosts of heavenly musicians, sprites, demons, and perfected ones,

Gaze upon Thee, and all are quite amazed.

Thy great form, of many mouths and eyes,

O great-armed one, of many arms, thighs, and feet,

Of many bellies, terrible with many tusks –

Seeing it the worlds tremble, and I too.

Touching the sky, aflame, of many colours,

With yawning mouths and flaming enormous eyes,

Verily seeing Thee [so], my inmost soul is shaken,

And I find no steadiness nor peace, O Viṣṇu!

And Thy mouths, terrible with great tusks,

No sooner do I see them, like the fire of dissolution [of the world],

Than I known not the directions of the sky, and I find no refuge;

Have mercy, Lord of Gods, Thou in whom the world dwells!

And Thee yonder sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,

All of them, together with the hosts of kings,

Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and yonder son of the charioteer [Karna] too,

Together with our chief warriors likewise,

Hastening enter Thy mouths,

Frightful with tusks, and terrifying;

Some, stuck between the teeth,

Are seen with their heads crushed.

### PART THREE

As the many water-torrents of the rivers  
Rush headlong towards the single sea,  
So yonder heroes of the world of men into Thy  
Flaming mouths do enter.

As moths into a burning flame  
Do enter unto their destruction with utmost impetuosity,  
Just so unto their destruction enter the worlds  
Into Thy mouths also, with utmost impetuosity.

Devouring them Thou lickest up voraciously on all sides  
All the worlds with Thy flaming jaws;  
Filling with radiance the whole universe,  
Thy terrible splendours burn, O Visnu!

Tell me, who art Thou, of awful form?  
Homage be to Thee: Best of Gods, be merciful!  
I desire to understand Thee, the primal one;  
For I do not comprehend what Thou hast set out to do.

#### (iii) *Bhakti Hymns*

The remainder of this section will be devoted to specimens of hymns which display the features of what is known as *bhaktimarga*, or the way of emotional personal religion directed towards Deity as believed to be manifested in one or other of the forms known as Vishnu or Siva. The number of these hymns is immense. Thus the Ālvars, a succession of saints who flourished between the sixth and tenth centuries A.D., are said to have produced as many as four thousand, and of these 173 are attributed to a woman saint, who dreamed of her spiritual marriage with Vishnu in the manner of Catholic medieval imagination. There is also a cultus of these Ālvars which is even more fervid than that of the Deity himself. Another in this company, Nammāḷvar, is said to have composed as many as 1,296 hymns. The Śaivites have also a large collection of hymns known as the 'Tirumurai', which was compiled about A.D. 1000, and which includes the *Tiruvaṣaḡan* by Manikka-Vaṣaḡar, whose



works are some of the finest devotional poetry that is to be found in India.

Later come the Maratha saints, whose hymns are among the most beautiful and popular, and are again Vaishnavite. Of these I give two examples from Jñānesvar (thirteenth century), and three from Tukaram (seventeenth century).

Finally we get the hymns produced by hybridization, from Kabir, who died in 1518, to the hymns of the Sikh Gurus which appear in Section IV of this book. Here the effect of contact with Islam can easily be detected.

The hymns are given in the following order:

- (a) A Śaivite hymn by Manikka Vaçagar – probably ninth century A.D.
- (b) A Vaishnavite hymn by Tondaradipodi, of the same period.
- (c) Hymns by Jñānesvar – thirteenth century
- (d) A hymn by Namdev – fourteenth century
- (e) Hymns by Tukaram – seventeenth century
- (f) Two hymns by Kabir.
- (g) Two hymns by a Śaivite poet, Taumanavar, probably eighteenth century.

The use of the hymns is as follows. They are not necessarily connected with temple worship. O'Malley\* relates that whereas in a temple the priest is the sole celebrant, and the people merely look on, other gatherings of a more strictly congregational nature take place, in a tent, a private house, or a building specially erected for the purpose. Some of these are known as *kirtans* or *sankirtans*, and are services of sacred song, often led by professional singers and accompanied by musical instruments. He says that in West India hundreds of men and women join together in singing the lyrical verses in praise of Vishnu which have been composed by the Marathi poet-saints. People are moved to a high degree of emotion, and whole nights may be spent in this form of devotion. At the meetings of the Hari Sabha or associations for the promotion of *bhakti*, a pundit may be called upon to read and expound sacred books, while parties of

\* C. L. O'Malley's *Popular Hinduism* (Camb. Univ. Press, 1935).

### PART THREE

singers may be hired to sing hymns to Vishnu. The collections of hymns, though treated with respect, are not of course regarded with the same veneration as the *śruti* or *smṛiti* books, which are read and expounded.

(a) *Hymn by Manikka Vaṇagar (Śaivite)\**

To me, who toiled and moiled mid fools that knew not way  
of final peace

He taught the way of pious love; and that bold deeds might  
cease and flee,

Purging the foulness of my will, made me pure bliss, took  
for his own;

'Twas thus the Father gave me grace; O rapture, who so  
blest as I?

Me trusting every lie as truth, plunged in desire of woman's  
charms,

He guarded that I perished not with soul perturbed, the  
Lord Superne,

On whose left side His consort dwells – He brought me  
nigh His jewelled feet,

'Twas thus my Guru gave me grace; O rapture, who so blest  
as I?

With those that knew not right or good, men ignorant, I  
wandered too.

The First, the primal Lord Himself, threefold pollution  
caused to cease;

Even me He took as something worth – like dog in sumptuous  
litter borne.

'Twas thus the Mother gave me grace; O rapture, who so  
blest as I?

\* Translation by Dr G. U. Pope.

(b) *A hymn by Tondaradipodi (Vaishnavite)*

Who gracious oped my darkened heart, and there  
 Enthroned, forced the current of my love  
 To him, what time with heretics and thieves  
 Of souls, and those in lusty pursuits bound,  
 In snares enmeshed of women gazelle-eyed,  
 I suffered, vast sunk deep in pits of vice.

Thou triest to draw  
 Me to Thy Holy Feet against my will,  
 Indeed I wonder why on earth I'm born....  
 'Tis but my certain hope Thy grace will save  
 Which makes me bold to walk to Thee and wait.\*

(c) *Hymns by Jñanesvar (Vaishnavite)*

Stand at the door of God  
 One moment nigh –  
 Thou hast the fourfold bliss  
 Obtained thereby.

Cry 'Hari', cry aloud,  
 Let the name ring;  
 So thou shalt merit gain  
 Past reckoning.

Dwell in the world, but still  
 Cry out amain –  
 Witness the ancient saints –  
 Thou shalt attain.

Yea (hark to Jñanadev)  
 Vyasa† has told –

\* Translation from the *Vishistadvaitin* (Çriranga, 1906).

† Vyasa is the name of the traditional author of the *Mahabharata*, and the reference here is plainly to the story in the *Gita* of the epiphany of Vishnu to Arjuna.

### PART THREE

How to the Pandavs' house  
God came of old.

\*

There needs not a propitious hour  
This name to cry.  
Lo, both who speaks it and who hears  
Are saved thereby.

This holy name bears quite away  
All man's offence, -  
Hari, the saviour e'en of men  
Of little sense.

Who speak this name, the soul of all,  
O happy they.  
Plain for their fathers' feet they make  
The heavenward way.\*

(d) *A hymn by Namdev (Vaishnavite)*

Now all my days with joy I'll fill, full to the brim  
With all my heart to Vitthal cling, and only Him.

He will sweep utterly away all dole and care;  
And all in sunder shall I rend illusion's snare.

O altogether dear is He, and He alone,  
For all my burden He will take to be His own.

Lo, all the sorrow of the world will straightway cease,  
And all unending now shall be the reign of peace.†

\* These two translations are by Dr Nicol MacNicol.

† Translation by Dr MacNicol. Vitthal is another name for Vithoba, who is venerated as an *avatar* of Vishnu. It is curious to notice that in some of his hymns Namdev addresses the god as a mother, although usually Vishnu is conceived as of the male sex.

(e) *Three hymns by Tukaram (Vaishnavite)*

*O save me, save me!*

O save me, save me, Mightiest,  
Save me and set me free.  
O let the love that fills my breast  
Cling to thee lovingly.

Grant me to taste how sweet thou art;  
Grant me but this, I pray,  
And never shall my love depart  
Or turn from thee away.

Then I thy name shall magnify  
And tell thy praise abroad,  
For very love and gladness I  
Shall dance before my God.

Grant to me, Vitthal, that I rest  
Thy blessed feet beside;  
Ah, give me this, the dearest, best,  
And I am satisfied.

*Though He slay me*

Now I submit me to thy will,  
Whether thou save or whether kill;  
Keep thou me near or send me hence,  
Or plunge me in the war of sense.

Thee in my ignorance I sought,  
Of true devotion knowing nought.  
Little could I, a dullard, know,  
Myself the lowest of the low.

### PART THREE

My mind I cannot steadfast hold;  
My senses wander uncontrolled.  
Ah, I have sought and sought for peace.  
In vain; for me there's no release.

Now bring I thee a faith complete  
And lay my life before thy feet.  
Do thou, O God, what seemeth best;  
In thee, in thee alone is rest.

In thee I trust, and, hapless wight,  
Cling to thy skirts with all my might.  
My strength is spent, I, Tuka, say;  
Now upon thee this task I lay.

#### *Pāṇḍurang*

Who asks if spent and weary we?  
Who else, O Pāṇḍurang, but thee?

Whom shall we tell our joy or grief?  
Who to our thirst will bring relief?

Who else this fever will assuage?  
Who bear us o'er the ocean's rage?

Who will our heart's desire impart  
And clasp us to his loving heart?

What other master shall we own?  
What helper else but thee alone?

Ah, Tuka says, thou knowest all,  
Prostrate before thy feet I fall.

(f) *Two poems by Kabir (hybrid of Islam and Hinduism)*

The name of God is my wealth;  
 I cannot tie it in a knot; or sell it for my livelihood.  
 The Name is my field, the Name is my garden.  
 I Thy slave, O God, perform Thy service and seek Thy  
 protection.  
 Thy name is my wealth, Thy name my capital;  
 I know none but Thee.  
 Thy Name is my kindred, Thy Name my brethren.  
 Thy Name my associates who will assist me at the last  
 moment.

It is not by fasting and repeating prayers and the creed  
 That one goeth to heaven;  
 The inner veil of the temple of Mecca  
 Is in man's heart, if *the truth* be known.

Make thy mind thy Kaaba, thy body its enclosing temple,  
 Conscience its prime teacher: ...  
 Sacrifice wrath, doubt, and malice;  
 Make patience thine utterance of the five prayers.  
 The Hindus and the Musalmans have the same Lord.

(g) *Two hymns by Taumanavar (Śaivite)*

*Art Thou not grace?\**

Female is God is one faith's teaching;  
 Another teacheth male is He:  
 A third of all beliefs will babble  
 And wildly cry its creed to be  
 Now this, now that, is God, ever  
 Uncertain and ungaining go,

\* Translated by Isaac Tambyah.

### PART THREE

Heedless of what may follow after,  
From thought to thought and nothing know.  
A fourth sees God in light whose glory  
The tongue of man can never tell.  
One says that God is space and vastness:  
God is the state where ever dwell  
Sound and the other primal causes.  
Some say God is the atom sole  
Surviving wreckage universal  
When all things into ruin roll;  
That God is present, past, and future,  
The threefold time is what some say. —  
These thou becoming, all transcendest  
And in the gracious interplay  
Of deeds Divine art Bliss eternal.  
O! marvel unto men like me,  
The workings of Thy grace are wondrous!  
Shall I not marvel ceaselessly,  
O life of life That all sustainest,  
For time that is and time to be,  
And all where Fulness Thou remainest  
For time that is and time to be?

#### *Not poor in grace\**

'Tis true this body is unlasting,  
Yet Thou, the Silent One, hadst given  
Thy servant, one, a method mystic  
In which if only I had striven  
To stand, this body might be lasting.  
But I, inadequate, cannot learn  
To train my mind to self-rejection:  
The food which I by begging earn

\* Translated by Isaac Tambyah.



Ill suits the body. So, for ever  
 In Thy pure Presence let me be,  
 And there in meekness render service  
 To those whose is the victory  
 Begun o'er Death, who are mind-mighty,  
 And serving whom I shall be strong  
 In power of mind and in the practice  
 That easily would come ere long  
 Of wisdom. Grant me one petition –  
 Keep me from this one poverty  
 The poverty in Thy grace poorest –  
 O now, compassionate, grant me.  
 Thou Life of life That all sustainest,  
 For time that is and time to be,  
 And all where Fulness Thou remainest.  
 For time that is and time to be.

(iv) *Jain Literature*

Space precludes any extracts from the latter, but a brief account of the sacred books of Jainism may not be out of place. None of these are considered to be actually the compositions of Mahavira himself, although in certain cases they claim to record discourses delivered by him. The canon of the books was completed about A.D. 454 or perhaps 60 years later. It is said to consist of two sorts of works, *purvas* and *angas*, and there is considerable difference of opinion between the two main Jain sects, the Svetambaras and Digambaras, as to how many of the original treatises have survived (the Digambaras deny that any have). Quite clearly, for the first few centuries the tradition was handed down orally. Some of the works are in prose, some in verse, some mixed. The subjects dealt with are: (i) philosophical theology, (ii) ethics, and especially asceticism. Great stress is laid upon the latter, and the ethical level is remarkably high.

## PART FOUR

WE begin here with some extracts from later Jewish literature. First, specimen passages from Talmudic and Rabbinical writings. Second, some of the most famous liturgical passages, showing the nature of Jewish synagogue prayers, and including a few examples of the greater Jewish hymns. Third, some logia from the books of the Chassidim.

We then pass on to give notable examples from the Qur'ānic Suras, both earlier and later, and follow these with some sayings attributed to the Prophet in the Traditions.

These are followed by a note on Sufism, illustrated by two Sufi poems.

Then come some extracts from the hybrid Hindu-Moslem sacred literature of the Sikhs, the *Granth Sahib*.

Next I have selected two really modern sets of post-biblical logia, to illustrate how difficult it is for any new religious leader to get away from the (at any rate) covert influence of the Christian scriptures. Of these the first group consists of a short chain of sayings attributed to the nineteenth-century Japanese prophet Kawate Bunjiro, extracted from the *Gorikai* or sacred book of the sect which he founded, the Konko Kyo, set side by side with a few passages from other Shinto writings. The second group consists of a fairly substantial extract from the *Book of Mormon*, followed by two passages from Mrs Eddy's *Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures*. Finally I give a few examples of hymns to illustrate what has been called 'The New Christianity'. A note on Baha'ism has been appended to page 310.

### ¶ I

## THE TALMUD

It is important to distinguish clearly between the Torah, or written law, or *guidance* given by Yahweh to His people, and the oral tradition, afterwards embodied in script, which represents the fruit of

Jewish learning and is of the nature of commentary upon it. Talmud means 'study', and accordingly 'the books in which the results of this study are preserved'. These books took shape during the period which followed the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This period falls into three divisions. First, that of the *Tannaim* or teachers, who were all Pharisees, and who settled at a small place near Jaffa and founded a *beth hamidrash* or academy, under Johanan ben Zakkai and his successors, two of whom eventually completed the Palestinian Talmud, which as now printed occupies some four to eight volumes. Second, that of the *Amoraim* or interpreters, when the influence, after about the year A.D. 220, moved to Babylonia, and the Academy of Sura compiled the Babylonian Talmud. Finally came the age known as that of the *Saboraim* or deciders, in which finishing touches were put to the Talmudic corpus, and decisions were reached on many outstanding points, but no new composition was done. This period ended about the year A.D. 550 and the age of the composition of the Talmud thus came to a finish. It was followed by the age of the *Geonim* or Excellencies, the title given to the heads of the two leading Jewish academies in Babylonia. This period continued from the latter part of the sixth century to the first half of the eleventh, and during this time the Geonim were recognized as the main Jewish ecclesiastical authority not only in Babylonia but wherever Jewish communities existed.

It will thus be seen that the Judaism which Mohammed knew and to which he was obviously deeply indebted was not the Judaism which we know best, i.e. that of the time of Christ, but the Talmudic Judaism, which not only interpreted the Hebrew scriptures, but embroidered them with material of a traditional, legendary, and even allegorical character. This will be clear from some of the passages from the Qur'ān which will be quoted in due course.

Here at this point we are only concerned with a few short extracts from some of the principal tractates of the Babylonian Talmud:

(i) An anonymous passage from the Sayings of the Jewish Fathers (*Pirke Aboth*), which contains obvious additions from folklore to the narrative of Genesis.

(ii) A passage from the tractate on Passover, which shows a belief in demons very similar to that of the Moslems regarding Djinn.

## PART FOUR

(iii) A passage from the tractate *Baba Kamma* which deals with civil law. The first part is from the Mishnah, which is the codification of oral commentary on the Torah, and means literally 'the repetition of the law'. The second part is from what is called Gemara, which is a further commentary on the Mishnah.

In the case of the above, number one gives only the actual Mishnah or tradition. The second extract gives part of the Gemara or commentary upon the Mishnah. The particular passage from the latter upon which this Gemara is written is given at the head in italics. In the third example the Mishnah and Gemara are given together in the exact sequence in which they occur in the text.

### (i) *From the Fathers of the Mishnah (the Tractate Pirke Aboth)*

This tractate is appointed to be read at the afternoon service on Sabbaths. The custom dates from the Geonic period.\* In Spain it was customary to read it in the mornings.

## Chapter V

MISHNAH 1. With ten [divine] utterances was the world created. And what is this [scriptural] information [meant] to tell, for surely it could have been created with one utterance? But it is that penalty might be exacted from the wicked who destroy the world that was created with ten utterances, and to give a goodly reward to the righteous who maintain the world that was created with ten utterances.

MISHNAH 2. [There were] ten generations from Adam to Noah, in order to make known how long-extended is long-suffering with him; for all those generations were repeatedly acting provokingly, until he brought upon them the waters of the flood.

[There were] ten generations from Noah to Abraham, in order to make known how long-extended is long-suffering

\* See introduction to this section.

with him; for all those generations were repeatedly acting provokingly, until Abraham, our father, came and received the reward of all of them.

MISHNAH 3. With ten trials was Abraham, our father, proved, and he stood [firm] in them all; to make known how great was the love of Abraham, our father (peace be upon him).

MISHNAH 4. Ten wonders were wrought for our fathers in Egypt, and ten at the [Red] Sea. Ten plagues did the Holy One, blessed be he, bring upon the Egyptians in Egypt and ten at the [Red] Sea.

[With] ten temptations did our fathers put to proof the Holy One, blessed be he, as it is said, Yet have they put me to proof these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice.

MISHNAH 5. Ten wonders were wrought for our fathers in the sanctuary: [i] no woman miscarried from the odour of the holy [i.e. sacrificial] flesh; [ii] the holy flesh never became putrid; [iii] no fly was seen in the slaughterhouse; [iv] no personal uncleanness occurred to the high priest on the Day of Atonement; [v] the rains did not extinguish the fire of the wood of the pile; [vi] the wind did not prevail against the column of smoke; [vii] no disqualification was found in the omer, or in the two loaves, or in the shewbread; [viii] they stood serried, yet prostrated themselves [with] wide spaces [between them]; [ix] never did a serpent or a scorpion do injury in Jerusalem; [x] and no man said to his fellow: 'The place is too strait for me to lodge overnight in Jerusalem.'

MISHNAH 6. Ten things were created on the eve of the sabbath at twilight, and these are they: [i] the mouth of the earth, [ii] the mouth of the well, [iii] the mouth of the she-ass, [iv] the rainbow, [v] the manna, [vi] the rod [of Moses], [vii] the shamir, [viii] the text, [ix] the writing, and [x] the tables. And some say: also the sepulchre of Moses, our

teacher, and the ram of Abraham, our father, and some say: also the destroying [spirits], and tongs too, made with tongs.

(ii) *From the Tractate Pessahim or Passover*

Expounding the regulations for its observance which occur in the Pentateuch.

MISHNAH. *On the eve of Passover close to Minhah a man must not eat till night-fall, even the poorest man must not eat [on the night of Passover] until he reclines, and they should give him not less than four cups [of wine], even if he receives relief from the charity plate.*

*Extract from the Gemara*

[Eatables] suspended in a house lead to poverty, as people say, 'He who suspends a basket [of food] puts his food in suspense.' Yet this relates only to bread, but it does not matter about meat and fish, [since] that is the usual way [of keeping them]. Bran in a house leads to poverty. Crumbs in a house lead to poverty: the demons rest upon them on the nights of Sabbaths and on the nights of the fourth days.

The genius appointed over sustenance is called *Neki'ah* [Cleanliness]; the genius appointed over poverty is called *Nabal* [Folly or Filth]. Dirt on the spout of a pitcher leads to poverty. He who drinks water out of a plate is liable to a cataract. He who eats cress without [first] washing his hands will suffer fear thirty days. He who lets blood without washing his hands will be afraid seven days. He who trims his hair and does not wash his hands will be afraid three days. He who pares his nails and does not wash his hands will be afraid one day without knowing what affrights him.

[Putting] one's hand to one's nostrils is a step to fear; [putting] one's hand to one's forehead is a step to sleep.

It was taught: if food and drink [are kept] under the bed, even if they are covered in iron vessels, an evil spirit rests upon them.

Our Rabbis taught: A man must not drink water either on the nights of the fourth days [Wednesdays] or on the nights of Sabbath, and if he does drink his blood is on his own head, because of the danger. What is the danger? An evil spirit. Yet if he is thirsty what is his remedy? Let him recite the seven 'voices' which David uttered over the water and then drink, as it is said: *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth, even the Lord upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh in pieces the cedars of the Lebanon.... The voice of the Lord heweth out flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and strippeth the forests bare; and in His temple all say: 'Glory'.* But if [he does] not [say this], let him say thus: 'Lul shafan anigron anirdafin, I dwell among the stars, I walk among lean and fat people.' But if [he does] not [say this], if there is a man with him, he should rouse him and say to him, 'So-and-so the sons of So-and-so, I am thirsty for water', and then he can drink. But if not, he knocks the lid against the pitcher, and then he can drink. But if not, let him throw something into it and then drink.

Our Rabbis taught: A man should not drink water from rivers or pools at night, and if he drinks, his blood is on his own head, because of the danger. What is the danger? The danger of blindness. But if he is thirsty, what is his remedy? If a man is with him he should say to him, 'So-and-so the son of So-and-so, I am thirsty for water.' But if not, let him say to himself, 'O So-and-so, my mother told me, "Beware of shabrire": Shabrire, berire, rire, ire re, I am thirsty for water in a white glass.'

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### (iii) *From the Tractate Baba Kamma*

This tractate expounds the regulations for damages in civil law, or *Nezikin*, as given in Exodus xxi.

MISHNAH. *If an ox gores a man and death results, in the case of mu'ad there is liability to pay kofer, but in the case of tam, there is no liability to pay kofer. In both cases, however, the oxen are liable [to be stoned] to death. The same [judgement applies] in the case of a [minor] son and the same [judgement applies] in the case of a [minor] daughter. But where the ox has gored a manservant or a maidservant [and death has resulted], compensation has to be given to the amount of thirty sela, whether the killed servant was worth a hundred maneh or not worth any more than one denar.*

GEMARA. But since when it was still in the state of *Tam* it had to be killed [for manslaughter], how could it ever have been possible to declare it *Mu'ad*? – Rabbah said: We are dealing with a case where, e.g., it had been estimated that it might have killed three human beings. – R. Ashi, however, said that such estimation amounts to nothing, and that we are therefore dealing here with a case where the ox gored and endangered the lives of three human beings. – R. Zebid [on the other hand] said: [The case is one] where, for instance, it killed three animals. But is an ox [which has been declared] *Mu'ad* to kill animals also *Mu'ad* to kill men? – R. Shimi therefore said: [The case is one] where for instance it killed three heathens. But is an ox [which has been declared] *Mu'ad* to gore persons who are heathens also *Mu'ad* with reference to those who are Israelites? – R. Simeon b. Lakish therefore said: [The case is one] where, for instance, it killed three persons who had already been afflicted with fatal organic diseases. But is an ox [which has been declared] *Mu'ad* with reference to persons afflicted with fatal organic diseases also *Mu'ad* regarding persons in sound condition? – R. Papa therefore



said: [The case is one where] the ox [on the first occasion] killed [a sound person] but escaped to the pasture, killed again [a sound person] but similarly escaped to the pasture. — R. Aha the son of R. Ika said: [The case is one] where, for instance, [two witnesses alleged in every case an alibi against the three pairs of witnesses who had testified to the first three occasions of goring, and] it so happened that [after evidence had been given regarding the fourth time of goring the accusation of the alibi with reference to the first three times of goring fell to the ground as] a new pair of witnesses gave evidence of an alibi against the same two witnesses who alleged the alibi [against the three sets of witnesses who had testified to the first three occasions of goring]. Now this explanation would be satisfactory [if the three days required for] the declaration of *Mu'ad* refer to [the goring of] the ox [so as to make sure that it has an ingrained tendency]. But if the three days are needed to warn the owner, why should he not plead [against the plaintiff], 'I was not aware [that the evidence as to the first three gorings was genuine]'? [This could not be pleaded where], e.g., it was stated [by the very last pair of witnesses] that whenever the ox had [gored and] killed he had been present [and witnessed every occasion]. — Rabina said: [The case of an ox not being stoned after any of the first three fatal gorings might be] where, though recognizing the owner of the ox [the witnesses who testified to the first three times of goring] did not at that time recognize the identity of the ox [also]. But what could the owner have done [where the ox that gored and killed had not been identified]? [He is culpable because] they could say to him: 'Knowing that an ox inclined to gore has been among your herd, you ought to have guarded the whole of your herd.'

One can compare with the above similar regulations in the Code of Khammurabi, and also the regulations for Moslems which cover most of life, and are known as the Shari'a, and which were composed

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by Moslem lawyers in antiquity on the basis of the Qur'ān, the Hadith, and deductions made by the learned, i. e. *ijtihad*, and consensus of opinion, or *ijma*.

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## PASSAGES FROM JEWISH LITURGICAL PRAYERS

The Jewish Prayer Book is of extreme importance in the history of religion and especially in the study of Christian worship. As Elbogen has pointed out, it is the earliest form of divine office, apart from material sacrifices, and was offered with great regularity not only on Sabbaths and festivals, but on every day throughout the year. Influenced no doubt by pre-Hebrew Mēsopotamian liturgies, it has become the efficient instrument of Jewish monotheism, and, as we shall see, it has in its turn influenced to a greater or less extent the structure and contents of all Christian prayer books.

As it now appears in Singer's complete ninth (1912) English-Hebrew edition, which was originally subsidized by Mrs Nathaniel Montefiore, and finally annotated by Dr Israel Abrahams, the distinguished Cambridge rabbinical scholar, it is a large volume, comprising private devotions for many occasions, selected passages of scripture (including psalms), the famous rabbinical moral treatise *Pirke Aboth* (the Sayings of the Jewish Fathers), daily and Sabbath synagogue services, with the proper prayers for special fasts and festivals, services for the New Year and the Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement, offices for circumcision, marriage, thanksgiving after childbirth, visitation of the sick, burial, and of course (included in the daily services) the *Shema*, the Eighteen Benedictions or *Shemoneh 'Esreh*, and certain famous Hebrew non-biblical hymns.

The extracts given here comprise:

- (i) two of the best-known hymns;
- (ii) the *Shema* and (iii) the *Shemoneh 'Esreh*;
- (iv) the *Ahabah* prayer;
- (v) the poem *Lechah Dodi* for the eve of the Sabbath;
- (vi) the *Kedushah* in the morning service;
- (vii) the *Kiddush* for the Sabbath evening.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### (i) *Two Hymns*

(a) The hymn *Adon Olam* – Lord of the Universe or Eternity – was written in the age of the Geonim (i.e. between the latter part of the sixth century and the first half of the eleventh century A.D.), but its actual authorship is unknown.

(b) The hymn *Yigdal* is a metrical exposition of the Thirteen Principles of the Hebrew faith as set forth by Maimonides, the Spanish Jew of the twelfth century. Maimonides died in 1204, and it has been conjectured that the name of the actual author of the hymn, Yehiel son of Baruch, is interwoven in the last line of it. In that case its composition belongs to the fourteenth century. The original, like much Hebrew poetry of the Middle Ages, is written in rhyme and metre, not as in the case of ancient Hebrew poetry, in unrhymed parallel statements.

(a) *Adon Olam* (with prayer following it)

Lord of the Universe, who reigned  
Ere earth and heaven's fashioning,  
When to create the world He deigned,  
Then was His name proclaimed King.

And at the end of days shall He,  
The dreaded One, still reign alone,  
Who was, who is, and still will be,  
Unchanged upon His glorious throne.

And He is one, His powers transcend,  
Supreme, unfathomed, depth and height,  
Without beginning, without end,  
His are dominion, power, and might.

My God and my Redeemer He,  
My Rock in sorrow's darkest day,  
A help and refuge unto me,  
My cup's full portion, when I pray.

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My soul into His hand divine  
Do I commend: I will not fear,  
My body with it I resign,  
I dread no evil: God is near.

O my God, the soul which thou gavest me is pure; thou didst create it, thou didst form it, thou didst breathe it into me; thou preservest it within me; and thou wilt take it from me, but wilt restore it unto me hereafter. So long as the soul is within me, I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, Sovereign of all worlds, Lord of all souls! Blessed art thou, O Lord, who restorest souls unto dead bodies.

(b) *Yigdal*

The living God we praise, exalt, adore!  
He was, He is, He will be evermore.

No unity like unto His can be;  
Eternal, inconceivable is He.

No form or shape has th'incorporeal One,  
Most holy beyond all comparison.

He was, ere aught was made in heaven or earth,  
But His existence has no date or birth.

Lord of the Universe is He proclaimed,  
Teaching His power to all His hand has framed.

He gave His gift of prophecy to those  
In whom He gloried, whom He loved and chose.

No prophet ever yet has filled the place  
Of Moses, who beheld God face to face.

Through him (the faithful in His house) the Lord  
The law of truth to Israel did accord.

This law God will not alter, will not change,  
For any other through time's utmost range.

He knows and heeds the secret thoughts of man:  
He saw the end of all ere aught began.

With love and grace does He the righteous bless,  
He metes out evil unto wickedness.

He at the last will His anointed send,  
Those to redeem, who hope, and wait the end.

God will the dead to life again restore.  
Praised be His glorious name for evermore.

(ii) *The Shema*

The *Shema*, so called from the first word (*Shema*=Hear!), consists of three passages from the Pentateuch: Deut. vi. 4-9, Deut. xi. 13-21, and Num. xv. 37-41. The recitation of the *Shema* and the accompanying benedictions was part of the regular daily ritual of the Temple (*Mishnah Tamid* v. 1), and the custom was taken over by the synagogue. The *Shema* (and the previous benedictions) were recited by Reader and Congregation either in alternate verses or in some other responsive form.

When the individual recites his prayer privately, he prefaces to the *Shema* the three words *God, faithful King!* The initial letters of the Hebrew form the word *Amen!*, as already noted, in the Talmud (*Sabbath* 119b). The true reason for the addition of these three words may be that the recitation of the first paragraph of the *Shema* was considered as the 'reception of the yoke of the kingdom', just as the second paragraph was the 'reception of the yoke of the commandments' (*Mishnah Berakhoth* ii. 2). But the idea of the divine kingship does not verbally occur throughout the three paragraphs of the *Shema*. The idea is introduced in the doxology which is interpolated after the first verse of the *Shema*, but this doxology (though now included in private prayer) belongs essentially to public worship, and

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in order to introduce the idea of *kingship* in the private recitation of the *Shema*, the invocation *God, faithful King!* may have been introduced. Baer, however, remarks (p. 81): 'With these three words, the man who prays in private raises the number of words in the *Shema* from 245 to 248, which latter number corresponds to the 248 parts of the human frame (*Tanhumā Kedoshim*). He who prays with the congregation does not say these words, for the repetition of the last two words of the *Shema* united to the first word of the next paragraph completes the number 248 in another way. And it is written in an old commentary (and in the *Rokeah*) that the worshipper, when uttering these three introductory words (*God, King, faithful*), shall intensely realize what the words imply: *God* before the creation, *King* over all the world, *faithful* to give unto man immortality.'

The *Shema* expresses 'the fundamental truth of Israel's religion, the uniqueness and unity of God, and the fundamental duty founded upon it, viz. the devotion to him of the Israelite's whole being' (Driver).

'*Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.*' It is objected to this rendering that the repetition of the word *Lord* is unnecessary and unnatural. But it is not easy to find a better translation, though the sense of the verse is quite clear. The Anglican version renders: *Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord*, which is similar to the rendering in Zunz's Bible: *Hear, O Israel: the Eternal our God is a unique eternal Being*. Ibn Ezra has the good rendering; *Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord alone*. Another favourite version (that of the Greek) treats the sense as containing two distinct affirmations: *Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One*. This version is adopted by the Rashbam (R. Samuel ben Meir, 1085-1174, grandson of Rashi), and seems also to be implied in the explanation of the Midrash (*Siphre* ad loc.).

The doxology which follows (*Blessed be His name, whose glorious Kingdom is for ever and ever*) is not Biblical, but was regularly used in the Temple when the Tetragrammaton (which means the name of *four letters*) was uttered. The Hebrew cannot be precisely rendered but the phrase seems to have been developed as follows. First came simply: *Blessed be the Lord for ever* (Ps. lxxxix. 53). Then, as the scruples against the common use of the Tetragrammaton increased,

a paraphrase was substituted for the name of God, as is seen in an inscription of the fourth century B.C.: *Blessed be his name for ever*. This was further refined into: *Blessed be the name of his glory for ever* (Ps. lxxii. 19), a form which the *Targum Jonathan* on Deut. vi. 4 cites in connexion with the *Shema*. Finally the paraphrase went a step further and we attain the form now current (which may be preferably rendered: *Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom for ever and ever*). Thus the veneration for the name of God explains this progression in the paraphrastic forms chosen to replace it. But the final form is happy in including the idea of the *sovereignty* of God, which is not otherwise expressed in the *Shema*. It has also been suggested that the formula was introduced by the Pharisaic opponents of Herod and the Sadducean priesthood in order to emphasize the belief in the sole sovereignty of God as against the aristocratic tendency to admit the sovereignty of the Caesars (who also claimed divine honours). Parallel to this would be the contrast in two consecutive benedictions of the *Amidah*: *Reign thou over us, O Lord, thou alone* and *The dominion of arrogance do thou uproot*, where *dominion of arrogance* may refer to the Roman Empire.

The proclamation of the Unity of God is followed by the enunciation of man's duty to love him. Here we have 'the two great factors of the Religious Idea: God and Duty. Not belief alone, but belief ripening into loving obedience – this is the ideal. For faith in the supreme only attains its true purpose when it fulfils itself in the dedication of all our powers and faculties to his service' (M. Joseph). The Unity of God is the basis of the Jewish creed, the Love of God the basis of the Jewish life. This Love towards God was to be exerted with heart, and soul, and might. 'Feeling alone will not suffice; we need also will; and will alone does not suffice; it must be translated into deed' (Montefiore). The words embodying the basic dogma and duty of Judaism, regarded as the quintessence of the Law, were to be constantly in the Israelite's memory, and to be visibly written before his eyes. They were to be impressed on the young, to be recited in worship morning and evening, and the Law, of which they formed the epitome, was to be the subject of conversation and study at all times. They were to be a sign upon the hand and frontlets between the eyes – a precept which received literal fulfilment in the wearing

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of *tephillin* (phylacteries). They were also to be inscribed on the doorposts — an ordinance which gave rise to the *Mezuzah* (lit. 'door-post', and thence the glass, wood, or metal case containing the first two paragraphs of the *Shema*: Deut. vi. 4-9, xi. 13-21). The ancient Egyptians wrote 'lucky sentences' over the entrance of the house. The word 'phylactery' is derived from the Greek, and means 'safeguard' or 'amulet': it is therefore an improper translation of the 'frontlets' (later called *tephillin*) named in the *Shema*. For there is nothing of the idea of 'lucky texts' in the *mezuzah* or of amulet in the *tephillin*. The Jewish custom merely gives concrete form to abstract ideas. The *Shema* thus enshrines the fundamental *dogma* (Monotheism), the fundamental *duty* (Love), the fundamental *discipline* (Study of the Law), and the fundamental *method* (union of 'Letter' and 'Spirit') of the Jewish religion.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve



other gods, and worship them: and then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you. Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a-whoring: that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God.

(iii) *The Shemoneh 'Esreh*

The *Shemoneh 'Esreh*, or series of Eighteen Benedictions, is introduced by the words from Ps. li. 15 (E.V.):

O Lord, open Thou my lips,  
And my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

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### BENEDICTION I\*

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers,  
The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.  
†[God the Great One, the Mighty One, and the Revered  
One], God Most High, Who [dost grant loving mercies,  
and] dost possess all things, [who dost remember the pious  
deeds of the fathers, and showest compassion upon their  
children, and wilt bring a redeemer to their children's  
children for His Name's sake, in love; Merciful King,  
Saviour, Helper, and Shield].

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the Shield of Abraham.

### BENEDICTION II

Thou art mighty for ever, O Lord,  
[O Thou that quickenest the dead, Thou art mighty to save],  
That causeth the wind to blow, and the rain to descend.  
Thou sustainest the living [with mercy]. Thou quickenest the  
dead.

[With great mercies Thou dost heal the sick, dost help the  
weak, dost support the fallen, dost loose the bound, and dost  
keep faith with them that sleep in the dust. And who is like  
unto Thee, Master of mighty acts? And who resembleth  
Thee, that killest and makest alive, and causeth salvation to  
spring forth, that art faithful in quickening the dead?]

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that quickenest the dead.

### BENEDICTION III

Thou art holy, and holy is Thy Name,  
And holy ones praise Thee every day.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the Holy God.

\* When used in the public service this prayer is said first by the worshippers  
silently; it is then recited aloud by the Precentor or Reader.

† Words in square brackets are those portions which may be later additions:

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After this Benediction follows what is called the Kedushah ('Sanctification'); this is not an original part of the *Shemoneh 'Esreh*, and when it first came to be inserted is quite unknown; but it is mentioned in very early writings, and its presence in the Jewish liturgy is in any case pre-Christian. We shall have to say a word about it presently, when it will be seen to be of peculiar interest from the Christian liturgical point of view.

### BENEDICTION IV

Thou dost favourably grant knowledge unto men,  
And dost teach discernment unto men;  
Grant us from Thee knowledge, and understanding, and  
discernment.  
Blessed art Thou who dost graciously grant knowledge.

### BENEDICTION V

Cause us to return, our Father, unto Thy Law;  
And draw us near, our King, unto Thy service;  
And bring us back in perfect repentance to Thy presence.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that delightest in repentance.

### BENEDICTION VI

Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned;  
Pardon us, our King, for we have transgressed.  
For Thou art the God of goodness, Thou dost forgive.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, [who art gracious], who dost  
abundantly forgive.

### BENEDICTION VII

Look upon our affliction, and plead our cause, and haste to  
redeem us;  
For thou art God, [King], Mighty Redeemer.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the Redeemer of Israel.

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### BENEDICTION VIII

Heal us, O Lord our God, and we shall be healed;  
[Save us, and we shall be saved], Vouchsafe [perfect] healing  
to all our wounds,  
For Thou, O God, art a merciful Healer.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord that healest [the sicknesses of Thy  
people] Israel.

### BENEDICTION IX

Bless us, O Lord our God, in all the work of our hands,  
And bless our years, [and give dew and rain upon the face of  
the earth], and satisfy the world and its fullness with Thy  
goodness, [and give plenty upon the face of the earth  
through the richness of the gifts of Thy hands, and preserve  
and prosper, O Lord our God, this year with every kind of  
produce, (keeping) from it every kind of destruction and  
want; and grant to it issue, and hope, and plenty, and  
peace, and blessing, as in other good years].  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that blessest the years.

### BENEDICTION X

Sound the great horn for our freedom,  
And lift up the ensign to gather all our exiles from the four  
corners of the earth to our own land.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that gatherest [the outcasts of Thy  
people] Israel.

### BENEDICTION XI

Restore our judges as in former times, and our counsellors as  
in the beginning.  
[And put away from us grief and sighing], and do Thou alone  
reign over us [in mercy, in righteousness, and in judgement].  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord [and King], that lovest [righteous-  
ness and] judgement.

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### BENEDICTION XII

And for slanderers let there be no hope,  
And let all the Minim\* be destroyed as in a moment;  
And the kingdom of arrogance do Thou uproot and crush  
[speedily in our days].  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, [that crushest the enemies, and]  
that humblest the arrogant.

### BENEDICTION XIII

Upon the righteous, [and upon the pious], and upon the pros-  
elytes of righteousness  
[And upon the remnant of Thy people, even all the house of  
Israel] let Thy mercies be stirred, O Lord our God;  
And grant a good reward unto all that trust in Thy name [in  
truth; and set our portion with them for ever; let us not be  
ashamed, for in Thy Name have we trusted, and we have  
relied upon Thy salvation].  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, [the Stay and] the Trust of the  
righteous.

### BENEDICTION XIV

Do Thou dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, Thy city [according  
as Thou hast said].  
And built it an everlasting building speedily in our days.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that buildest Jerusalem.

### BENEDICTION XV

Do Thou cause the branch of David speedily to flourish,  
And do Thou exalt his horn by Thy salvation.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that causest [the horn of] salvation  
to flourish.

\* 'Heretics'; the reference is possibly to Christians; but some eminent Jewish scholars hold that the term refers to Gnostics and not to Christians (see Joël, Blicke..., i. 26, 29).

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### BENEDICTION XVI

Hear our voice, O Lord our God, [spare us] and have mercy upon us.

And accept our prayer in mercy [and favour].

[From Thy presence, O our King, turn us not away empty],  
for Thou hearest the prayer of every mouth.

Blessed art Thou that hearkenest unto prayer.

### BENEDICTION XVII

Accept, O Lord our God, Thy people Israel [and their prayer].

And restore the service to the Oracle of Thy House.

[And the fire-offerings of Israel and their prayer and their service do Thou speedily accept in love with favour; and may the service of Thy people Israel be ever acceptable],

And may our eyes behold Thy return to Zion [in mercy, as of yore].

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that restorest [speedily] Thy Shekinah unto Zion.

### BENEDICTION XVIII

We give thanks unto Thee [for Thou art He], O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers;

[The Rock of our lives, and the Shield of our salvation art Thou from generation to generation. We will give thanks unto Thee, and declare Thy praise] for our lives which are committed into Thy hand, and for our souls which are in Thy charge;

For Thy miracles, and for Thy wonders, and for Thy benefits at all times, [at evening, and morning, and mid-day. Thou art good, for Thy loving-kindnesses fail not; Thou art merciful, for Thy mercies cease not. For all the living praise Thy great Name; for Thou art good, Thou Good God].

Blessed art Thou, O Lord; [and beautiful] it is to praise Thee [and Thy name continually].

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

### BENEDICTION XIX

Give [goodly] peace and blessing [grace, and mercy, and loving-kindnesses] unto us, even unto Israel Thy people. Bless us altogether, O Lord our God, [in the light of Thy countenance; for in the light of Thy countenance Thou hast given us, O Lord our God, the Law, and life, love and mercy, righteousness and peace, blessing and loving-kindnesses]; yea, it is good in Thine eyes to bless Thy People Israel [with abundance of strength and peace]. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that blessest [Thy people Israel] with peace. Amen.

#### (iv) *Ahabah*

With abounding love hast thou loved us, O Lord our God, with great and exceeding pity hast thou pitied us. O our Father, our King, for our fathers' sake, who trusted in thee, and whom thou didst teach the statutes of life, be also gracious unto us and teach us. O our Father, merciful Father, ever compassionate, have mercy upon us; O put it into our hearts to understand and to discern, to mark, learn and teach, to heed, to do and to fulfil in love all the words of instruction in thy Law. Enlighten our eyes in thy Law, and let our hearts cleave to thy commandments, and unite our hearts to love and fear thy name, so that we be never put to shame. Because we have trusted in thy holy, great, and revered name, we shall rejoice and be glad in thy salvation. O bring us in peace from the four corners of the earth, and make us go upright to our land; for thou art a God who worketh salvation. Thou hast chosen us from all peoples and tongues, and hast brought us near unto thy great name for ever in faithfulness, that we might in love give thanks unto thee and proclaim thy unity. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast chosen thy people in love.

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The above prayer, one of the most beautiful in the liturgies of the world, is believed by Dr Abrahams to have been already a part of the service in the Temple prior to its use in the synagogue.

### (v) *Lechah Dodi*\*

Come, my friend, to meet the bride; let us welcome the presence of the Sabbath.

'Observe' and 'Remember the Sabbath day', the only God caused us to hear in a single utterance:† the Lord is One, and his name is One to his renown and his glory and his praise. Come, etc.

Come, let us go to meet the Sabbath, for it is a wellspring of blessing; from the beginning, from of old it was ordained, – last in production, first in thought. Come, etc.

O sanctuary of our King, O regal city, arise, go forth from thy overthrow; long enough hast thou dwelt in the valley of weeping; verily He will have compassion upon thee. Come, etc.

Shake thyself from the dust, arise, put on the garments of thy glory, O my people! Through the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, draw Thou nigh unto my soul, redeem it. Come, etc.

Arouse thyself, arouse thyself, for thy light is come: arise, shine; awake, awake; give forth a song; the glory of the Lord is revealed upon thee. Come, etc.

Be not ashamed, neither be confounded. Why art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted? The poor of my people trust in thee, and the city shall be builded on her own mound. Come, etc.

\* In this poem, written in the form of an acrostic on the name of the author R. Shelomo Halevi (Alkabets), the Sabbath is personified as a bride, whose visit to the faithful of Israel it is desired to honour and welcome.

† A reference to the Midrashic explanation (see Talmud *Shevuoth*, 20b) of the discrepancy between the two versions of the Fourth Commandment in Exodus XX. 8 and Deut. v. 12.



And they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that would swallow thee shall be far away: thy God shall rejoice over thee, as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride. Come, etc.

Thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left, and thou shalt reverence the Lord. Through the offspring of Perez we also shall rejoice and be glad. Come, etc.

Come in peace, thou crown of thy husband, with rejoicing and with cheerfulness, in the midst of the faithful of the chosen people: come, O bride; come, O bride. Come, etc.

This hymn, composed by a sixteenth-century Jew of Safed, is described by Dr Schechter as 'perhaps one of the finest pieces of religious poetry in existence'. It has been translated by Herder and Heine into German, and is now sung by Jews all the world over on the eve of the Sabbath.

(vi) *The Kedushah*

*Reader.* We will sanctify thy name in the world even as they sanctify it in the highest heavens, as it is written by the hand of thy prophet:

'And they called one unto the other and said,

*Cong.* Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.'

*Reader.* Those over against them say, Blessed —

*Cong.* Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place.

*Reader.* And in thy Holy Words it is written, saying,

*Cong.* The Lord shall reign for ever, thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord.

*Reader.* Unto all generations we will declare thy greatness, and to all eternity we will proclaim thy holiness, and thy praise, O our God, shall not depart from our mouth for ever, for thou art a great and holy God and King. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the holy God.

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[*During the Ten Days of Penitence conclude the Blessing thus:*]  
the holy King.

Thou favourest man with knowledge, and teachest mortals understanding.

[*At the conclusion of Sabbath or of a Festival say:*]

Thou hast favoured us with a knowledge of thy Law, and hast taught us to perform the statutes of thy will. Thou hast made a distinction, O Lord our God, between holy and profane, between light and darkness, between Israel and other nations, between the seventh day and the six working days. O our Father, our King, grant that the days which are approaching us may begin for us in peace, and that we may be withheld from all sin and cleansed from all iniquity, and cleave to the fear of thee.

O favour us with knowledge, understanding, and discernment from thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord, gracious Giver of knowledge.

Cause us to return, O our Father, unto thy Law; draw us near, O our King, unto thy service, and bring us back in perfect repentance unto thy presence. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who delightest in repentance.

Forgive us, O our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed; for thou dost pardon and forgive. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who art gracious, and dost abundantly forgive.

This portion of the morning service is of interest for at least two reasons. First because it contains the address to Our Father, showing that the Jews already at the time of Christ were not unfamiliar with this form of speech. Whereas however with them it was incidental, He seems to have placed it in the centre of devotional speech.

Second, because the versicles and responses seem to have served as a groundwork for the versicles and responses in the Christian liturgy. Indeed the *Sursum corda*, and the *Sanctus* which follows, show a close

affinity with the prayers in the *Kedushah* which culminate in the recital of the 'Holy, Holy, Holy'.

(vii) *Kiddush for Sabbath Evening*

The following is said in the home by the Master of the House, previous to partaking of the Sabbath Meal:

And it was evening and it was morning, – the sixth day.

And the heaven and the earth were finished and all their host. And on the seventh day God had finished His work which He had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and He hallowed it, because He rested thereon from all His work which God had created and made.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who createst the fruit of the vine.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments and hast taken pleasure in us, and in love and favour hast given us Thy holy Sabbath as an inheritance, a memorial of the creation – that day being also the first of the holy convocations, in remembrance of the departure from Egypt. For Thou hast chosen us and sanctified us above all nations, and in love and favour hast given us Thy holy Sabbath as an inheritance. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hallowest the Sabbath.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth.

This passage is given, chiefly because it is believed to refer to a pious Jewish practice, connected with the inauguration of the Sabbath, which may have been adapted by Christ to express a new meaning at the Last Supper, and may thus have contributed to the shaping of the primitive form of the Christian Eucharist.

\*

Beautiful as all the above passages are, it remains doubtful how much they are used by Jews at the present day. Robert Brunner,

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speaking at Stockholm in September 1948, said: 'Jewry to-day has to a large extent ceased to foster the Jewish religion. Only a small percentage of Jews attend the synagogue, while the rest have maintained very slight relations with it, or have broken them off altogether. Missionaries to Jews are dealing to-day, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, with people who are religiously indifferent, or who are free-thinkers or atheists. Before the second world war most of the pious observant Jews were to be found in the states of Eastern Europe, but to-day the pious eastern Jew is practically eradicated; among fifteen million Jews, the small remnant which has been preserved hardly counts. The modern secular Jew is hardly distinguishable from the modern secular Gentile.'

### 93

## CHASSIDIC LITERATURE

At the beginning of the eighteenth century there was born at the town of Okop in Podolia, on the old Polish-Turkish border, a villager of simple parentage but striking and magnetic personality, who is curiously enough known to us only by the epithets which his disciples applied to him, Israel Baal Shem Tov, or Israel the Master of the Good Name. He became famous first as a miracle-worker, and because of his supposed ignorance of Talmudic scholarship and his alleged magical practices, the Rabbis opposed him. In spite of this opposition, he rapidly gained in authority, and perhaps on account of his lay outlook and joyful affirmation of life, his rejection of asceticism, and his aim of establishing a small body of disciples who would dedicate themselves to an unworldly and spiritual career, writers like Martin Buber have seen in him a marked resemblance to Jesus of Nazareth. It is difficult to be sure how far this resemblance is due to the interpretation of the data by Buber, how far to a studied policy on the part of the Baal Shem, and how far to the natural tendency of the lives of religious leaders to develop along similar lines. The Besht, as he was called for short, wrote no book, and his sayings were for many years orally transmitted, with the confessed result that they received

embellishments and annotations. 'Emendations, alterations, additions, and individual interpretations entered into the body of authentic material for which the master himself was responsible.' Those who succeeded the Besht absorbed his ideas, and were so much stimulated by them that they poured forth a stream of maxims and stories which have been orally transmitted in all directions, and have at length (rather contrary to the spirit of the Besht and his friends) been committed to script and even printed. Indeed there is a vast Chassidic literature now in existence. It has of course no actual canonical significance, but the pious followers of the Chassidim value it greatly, and in the main it consists of sayings and anecdotes. A few of these are given below. My own recollection of the Chassidic movement goes back to the early days of my ministry, when I had many conversations with an old Jew from Eastern Europe who was a disciple, and who kept a small shop in the arcade of Putney Market. He possessed several volumes of Chassidic literature in Yiddish, and spoke much about the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* (the Holy Spirit) on whom the Chassidim depend for inspiration, and through possession by whom they claim to attain to a Super-Soul.

The following extracts will give some idea of what sayings were treasured.

### (i) *Miracles*

#### *The Zaddik's Will and God's\**

A Chassid heard much regarding the renown of Rabbi Israel Meir ha-Cohen, the 'Hafetz Hayyim', as a great Zaddik.

He chanced to meet a resident of Radin, where the 'Hafetz Hayyim' resided, and inquired: 'Does your Zaddik perform miracles?'

The Radiner Jew answered the Chassid: 'You deem it a miracle when God does the will of your Zaddik; we, however, deem it a miracle if it can be truthfully asserted that our Zaddik does God's will.'

\* From *The Chassidic Anthology*, p. 263.

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### (ii) *Pride*

#### *A 'Perfect Character'\**

Said the Besht: 'False humility can be illustrated by this story: A man was learned, gifted and charitable, but he was afflicted with the blemish of pride. He was told that if he learned humility he would become a perfect man. He acted upon this counsel, and studied humility until apparently he had learned it by heart. One day a man failed to show him deference. The man of supposed humility turned to him and said: "You fool! Do you not know that since I have learned humility, I am a man of perfect character?"'

### (iii) *Repentance*

#### *Holy Sparks within Sin†*

Said Rabbi Dov Baer of Meseritz: 'Sparks of divine splendour dwell even in sin, else it would be unable to subsist or to move even the smallest member.

'And what are the sparks that dwell in sin? Repentance. At the hour of thy repentance and of thy turning away from sin, the sparks that were in it are raised to the upper regions.'

#### *Admitting Our Prayers†*

Rabbi Schmelke commented on the phrase [Song of Songs ii. 9]: 'He looketh in through the windows.'

'A poorly dressed man wished to present a petition to the governor, but the doorkeeper refused to admit him. The petitioner then walked to a window of the room where the governor sat, and loudly begged for admittance.

'Likewise our uncleanness prevents our petitions from being heard by the Lord; but if we open our heart before offering our prayers, the Lord will vouchsafe them entrance.'

\* From *The Chassidic Anthology*, p. 355.

† *Ibid.*, p. 385.

*Intentional Sin\**

Said the Besht: 'If a man sins unknowingly, his sincere repentance and the declaration of his offences in his confession wipe away his transgressions. For the regret accompanied by a full intention never to repeat the sin can overcome offences performed without intention. But if a man sins purposely, how can he know whether his intentional repentance can overcome his intentional sin? The remedy lies in maintaining his mood of repentance for a long time until he is confident his sins have been forgiven.'

*The Prodigal's Return\**

Said the Meseritzer: 'A king had two sons. One was contented to be constantly in attendance on his father; the other preferred to enjoy himself away from home. There evil companions led him astray. The king was prompted to send his officers to fetch him for chastisement, but out of paternal love refrained from doing so. Later the prodigal regretted the anguish his conduct had caused his father, and of his own free will returned with a plea for pardon. The king was overjoyed and showed him more love and favour than to the other son who had never absented himself. Likewise, when a grievous sinner returns unto the Lord, He receives greater joy and favour than those who have never sinned.'

(iv) *Sabbath**Without the Sabbath Spirit †*

The Sassover Rabbi narrated the following parable: 'A man invited an important personage for a Sabbath meal, and prepared a sumptuous meal for him. Later, however, he changed his mind, and did not call for his guest.'

\* From *The Chassidic Anthology*, p. 387.

† *Ibid.*, p. 406.

'In similar fashion, many persons make elaborate preparations to welcome the Sabbath, but the atmosphere at their table is the same as on a week-day, and no Sabbath hymns are chanted.'

*The Cripple and the Porter\**

Said Rabbi Sholem: 'A famous musician once came to a town and posted announcements for a concert. All the well-to-do folk hurried to buy their seats. In the town there lived a man who was a great lover of music, but both his legs were crippled and he was so poor that he had not the price of a seat. He had just about enough for standing room, which was of no use to him. However, he could not bear to miss this event, and for a few groschen he induced a poor porter to carry him, perched on his back, to the concert hall. And thus seated on the porter's shoulders he listened with unbounded delight; but now and then he was so carried away by the player's genius and the beauty of the music that he forgot where he was sitting; he danced about, clapping his hands, until the porter began to complain: "You are breaking my neck; stop kicking my sides; don't press so on my shoulders!" But the cripple forgot these complaints in the intervals of playing until finally the porter said: "I cannot bear you any longer; I am going to set you down." The cripple implored his indulgence and in the next intermission asked the porter to carry him to a nearby wine-shop. There he ordered a large brandy for the porter and they returned to the concert hall. Now the porter, cheered and enlivened by the drink, was himself so touched by the music that he swayed and capered to its rhythms, no longer mindful of the antics of his burden. And thus a blissful peace was established between them, and both enjoyed the concert to its end.

'Thus it is clear,' continued the Rabbi, 'that the important

\* From *The Chassidic Anthology*, p. 409.



thing on the Sabbath is indeed to praise God with a pure soul; but the soul is unfortunately crippled without the body; lacking the body it can neither praise nor thank God. Now, should the body be impatient, dissatisfied, the soul will not achieve its Sabbath delight. Hence we are taught to satisfy the body, to cheer it with wine and good food, so that it too may be free to join the spirit in praise of the Almighty, to sustain the soul in joyful contemplation. Then only will the Sabbath be perfect.'

#### 14

### PASSAGES FROM MOSLEM LITERATURE

This section will contain selections from three sources: (i) the Qur'ān, (ii) the Hadith, (iii) the works of the Sufis, and (iv) a note on Baha'ism.

The Qur'ān is essentially the product of a single mind. It has been described as 'not a book, but a strong living voice'. This is indeed the case. As a book it is formless, full of repetitions, sometimes terse, more often rambling and prolix. One critic even calls it 'a dreary welter'. Its faults however are largely the result of the way in which it grew to its present proportions, and to inadequate translation, in which the rhythm is obscured.

The evidence seems to show that Mohammed himself began the compilation. The original utterances were probably short, very much like the briefer sayings of the Hebrew prophets or Christ, such as were collected in the Bible. Mohammed having, as he believed, received a message which it was essential he should proclaim, not merely memorized it, but afterwards recorded it in writing. (Whether he did so personally or by dictation is a debatable question. According to Moslem tradition, he was illiterate.) Such procedure is quite familiar to readers of the Old and New Testaments. There we find the various seers declaring that Yahweh, or the Lord, or the Glorified Christ has ordered them to record the messages received. The most notable instance is in Jeremiah xxxvi, where we read: 'The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: Take thee a roll of a book, and write thereon all the words that I have spoken unto thee against

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Israel and against Judah, and against all the nations.... Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book', etc. We also read in the last volume of the New Testament how the seer John, on the island of Patmos, heard 'a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia.'

Mohammed therefore is not a slavish imitator in his enterprise. He is to be thought of as merely following the recognized custom of the Middle East, in which alleged utterances of Deity are recorded for preservation and wider curculation. But the effect of this method is not to produce a well-ordered literary masterpeice, but a collection of forcible, turgid, and disjointed sentences. It is often as though a B.B.C. van were making a recording of an actual voice, with all the rhetorical questions and colloquialisms of a preacher addressing a crowd.

### (i) *The Qur'ān*

Here, for an example, is Sura 83, as rendered by Dr Richard Bell:

#### (a) *Surat-al-Mutaffifin* (literally, 'The chapter of the scrimpers')

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, The Compassionate!  
Woe to the scrimpers,

Who, when they measure for themselves against the people,  
fill full,

But when they measure or weigh to them, scant!

Do these not think that they will be raised up

At a mighty day? -

[On the day when the people will rise to the Lord of the  
worlds.]

Nay, but the book of the scoundrels is in Sijjin.

What has let thee know what is Sijjin? -

A book inscribed.

[Woe then to those who count false,

To those who count as a lie the Day of Judgement.

No one counts it a lie but each ill-disposed and guilty one.

When our signs are recited to him, he says, 'old-world tales'.

Nay, but encrusted on their hearts is what they have been piling up.]

[Nay but on that day from their Lord will they be excluded; Then, lo they are roasting in Hell;

Then will it be said: This is what ye have been counting a lie.]

Nay, but the book of the virtuous is in Illiyyin.

What has let thee know what is Illiyyin? –

A book inscribed,

Which those who have been brought near will witness.

Verily the virtuous are in delight,

Upon the couches looking round.

One recognizes in their face the cheerfulness of the delight.

They are given to drink of pure wine sealed,

Of which the seal is musk – for that let the aspirers aspire.

And the admixture – of Tasnim;

[A spring at which drink those brought near.

Lo, those who have sinned used at those who have believed to laugh,

And when they passed by them to wink at each other,

And when they returned to their family, they returned amused,

And when they saw them, they said: Lo, these are astray,

Though over them they had not been sent as guardians.

So to-day those who have believed, at the unbelievers are laughing,

Upon the couches looking round.

Have the unbelievers been given as a reward what they have been doing? –]

So far so good. But the original Qur'ān as it left the hands of Mohammed was probably added to after his death by his followers and admirers, and even in his own lifetime it may have undergone

editing and amplification. Thus Bell holds that in the sura quoted above, verses 6, 10-14, 15-17, and 28-36 are later Medina additions. Moreover Mohammed not only collected his sayings into chapters or suras (the word means literally 'a course of bricks laid together side by side') but he invented new suras for the purpose of cancelling or superseding earlier revelations. Indeed, whereas at first he seems honest enough, in some of the later suras he seems to claim divine revelatory authority for convenient deliverances. The consequences may be imagined when it is added that in the absence of printing, all copying was the work of scribes, who very often seem to have written additions on the back of sheets already filled up on the one side. Later generations, in recopying, inserted these additions in the main text, as though they were part of the original suras: but as the insertions are generally in a different rhythm or metre from their context, they are hardly likely to have been part of it from the beginning.

The unravelling and correct dating of the different parts of the Qur'ān is therefore an extremely difficult and complicated task, and in many cases a wellnigh impossible one, save in the form of conjectures possessing varying degrees of probability. Those who have studied good editions of the Hebrew prophets, or Dr Charles's famous edition of the Book of Revelation, will be aware that the same difficulties present themselves there; they are the problems of nearly all ancient literature, and are by no means confined to the sacred book of Islam. But all this means that the Qur'ān in its standard form is by no means the Qur'ān as it left the hands of Mohammed. Yet the orthodox doctrine about the book is virtually that of complete verbal inspiration, stated in a more uncompromising form than has ever been the case with any other sacred book. There are of course verbal inspirationists among Christians, and some papal utterances about the Bible have gone very near to accepting the same doctrine about it, but it may be said that for many years large numbers of Christians in authority have not taken this naïve line, but have distinguished between the revelation and the means by which the revelation has come to be recorded, applying to the latter the ordinary methods of impartial literary criticism, and accepting the maxim of Dr Jowett: 'Interpret the Bible as you would any other book.'

On reading the Qur'ān, however, it is found that the disadvantages

of its mode of compilation are not really as serious as they sound. The reason for this is precisely that principle which we have found to apply to all sacred books, i. e. that they are meant to be experienced, rather than absorbed by the intellect. Indeed the impression made upon us by the Prophet somewhat resembles that of Byron, as Matthew Arnold describes it:

‘He taught us little, but our soul  
Hath felt him, like the thunder’s roll.’

The personality of Mohammed makes itself almost oppressive through all the suras. Again and again the same doctrines are emphasized, the same stern warnings given, the same virtues and pious practices inculcated. Very little is taught but what can be deduced from passages in the Old Testament or some of the apocalyptic literature, especially in regard to the Day of Judgement. The matter, as Rodwell says, is for the most part borrowed, but the manner is all the Prophet’s own. First-hand knowledge of the Bible is scanty, and comes late, but there are frequent evidences of dependence upon Rabbinic legends, and upon Christian traditions from distorted apocryphal sources. Thus for instance the story of Joseph (Sura 12) is not related in its plain form as in Genesis, but with additions from *Midrash Rabba*, *Midrash Yalkut*, and *Midrash Tanchumah*, as well as *Sepher Hayashar*, all extra-biblical Jewish works; while Mohammed puts into the mouth of Joseph some of his own most characteristic invective against the polytheists. The *Jerusalem Targum*, *Mishna Sanhedrin*, and *Pirke Aboth* are also quoted in other passages. References to Jesus of Nazareth contain matter which can be traced back to the *Protevangelium of James*, the *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy*, or the *History of the Nativity of Mary*.<sup>\*</sup> The canonical gospels themselves do not seem to have been studied.

Yet the result of reading the Qur’ān is to be carried away by the burning conviction of the author. There is a crude, strong, and wild appeal about his cadences, and a kind of irregular rhythm, ending at intervals with a jingling rhyme. The nearest approach must no doubt have been the rhapsodical utterances of early Arabian minstrel-poets.

Rodwell points out that the Qur’ān enjoys the distinction of having

<sup>\*</sup> See M. R. James, *op. cit.*, for a good account of these books.

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been the starting-point of a fresh literary and philosophical movement. It gave the first impetus to a new and vital outburst of Arabic literature, encouraging the study of Greek philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and other sciences. But this of course was not its direct aim and object. Before all else it was a religious book, with an intense message about the transcendence of Deity.

The quality of the suras declines as the years advance. Mohammed's character was probably spoilt by his successes, and his tendency to prolixity also increased with his age. There is good reason for thinking that the shorter suras are mostly the earlier ones, save where a number of short passages have been fused together to make a long one. Here are two of these shorter suras:\*

(b) *Sura 93: The Brightness*

By the morning brightness,  
By the night when it is still,  
Thy Lord hath not taken leave of thee, nor despised thee.  
The last is better for thee than the first;  
Assuredly in the end thy Lord will give thee to thy satisfaction.

Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter? –  
Did He not find thee erring and guide thee? –  
Did He not find thee poor and enrich thee? –  
So as for the orphan, be not overbearing;  
And as for the beggar, scold not;  
And as for the goodness of thy Lord, discourse of it.

(c) *Sura 96: Clots of Blood*

Recite in the name of thy Lord who created,  
Created man from clotted blood.  
Recite, for thy Lord is the most generous,  
Who taught by the pen,  
Taught man what he did not know.  
Nay but verily man acts presumptuously

\* Translations by Richard Bell.

Because he thinks himself independent.  
 Verily to thy Lord is the return.  
 Hast thou considered him who restrains  
 A servant when he prays? –  
 Hast thou considered if he be following the guidance  
 Or urging to piety? –  
 Hast thou considered if he have counted false, and turned  
 away? –  
 Does he not know that Allah sees? –  
 Nay, but surely, if he do not desist, we shall seize him by the  
 forelock,  
 A lying sinful forelock.  
 So let him call his council,  
 We shall call the imps of Hell.  
 Nay, obey him not, but do obeisance and draw near.

Each sura has a name and a number, the name being derived from some key-word or phrase occurring in it. Thus Sura 67 is called 'The Pen', from the opening invocation 'By the Pen and what they write, Thou, O Prophet, by the grace of Thy Lord, art not possessed by demons.' Sura 39 is called: 'The Troops', because in the seventy-first verse occurs the prophecy, 'By troops shall the unbelievers be driven towards hell.' Except in Turkey, the Qur'ān is always read and repeated in Arabic, though in many Moslem lands printed editions circulate, with a vernacular translation running parallel to the Arabic text.

Although the orthodox and standard belief is that the Qur'ān is literally and verbally inspired, having its original externally laid up in Heaven, either in the sense that the very Arabic words are inspired, or in the sense that the spiritual word in the mind of Deity is the exact counterpart of the written word, there has been a school of thought called Mutazilite which held that while the actual doctrine of the Qur'ān was eternal, the language in which it was expressed was that of human beings and therefore fallible. It should also be noted that standard Moslem theology distinguishes between two sorts of inspiration: that attributed to Mohammed himself, and enshrined in the

Qur'ān, which is called *wahj* or *wahj zahir*, 'external inspiration'; and that which is called *ilham* or general inspiration. No one since the day of Mohammed is credited with possessing the former, but besides the Prophet, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus are believed to have had it. *Ilham* is inspiration of a lesser sort, transcendent guidance in which a prophet or saint delivers his own subject-matter in his own language.

It must be plain that such theories are of necessity invented in order to account for the facts of experience, namely that (i) some prophets stand out conspicuously above others, (ii) that nowhere is Deity entirely without witnesses to His Being, Activity, and Attributes, (iii) that the records of the utterances and careers of men of God are transmitted in language which is sometimes obscure and seldom free from scribal errors. The theories need not be and in fact are not confined to Islam, but occur for example in the writings of an early Christian Father such as Origen, and on a more elaborate scale in the Bampton lectures of the late Dr Sanday.

I now give two of the longer suras.\* The first of these is by tradition held to be very early, and there are reasons for agreeing with this. First, it is mostly in short lines. Second, it refers to incidents which seem to have occurred at the time of Mohammed's call. The original text may however have been elaborated. The second quotation is more prosaic in form, and belongs to the later group of suras. It contains elements which come plainly from Talmudic Judaism.

(d) *Sura 74: The Enwrapped*

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful  
 O Thou, enwrapped in thy mantle!  
 Arise and warn!  
 Thy Lord – magnify Him!  
 Thy raiment – purify it!  
 The abomination – flee it!  
 And bestow not favours that thou mayest receive again with  
 increase;  
 And for thy Lord wait thou patiently.  
 For when there shall be a trump on the trumpet,

\* These are from Rodwell's version.



That shall be a distressful day,  
 A day, to the Infidels, devoid of ease,  
 Leave me alone to deal with him whom I have created,  
 And on whom I have bestowed vast riches,  
 And sons dwelling before him,  
 And for whom I have smoothed all things smoothly  
 down; -

Yet desireth he that I should add more!  
 But no! because to our signs he is a foe  
 I will lay grievous woes upon him.  
 For he plotted and he planned!  
 May he be cursed! How he planned!  
 Again, may he be cursed! How he planned!  
 Then looked he around him,  
 Then frowned and scowled,  
 Then turned his back and swelled with disdain,  
 And said, 'This is merely magic that will be wrought;  
 It is merely the word of a mortal.'  
 We will surely cast him into Hell-fire.  
 And who shall teach thee what Hell-fire is?  
 It leaveth nought, it spareth nought,  
 Blackening the skin.  
 Over it are nineteen angels.

None but angels have we made guardians of the fire: nor  
 have we made this to be their number but to perplex the un-  
 believers, and that they who possess the Scriptures may be  
 certain of the truth of the Koran, and that they who believe  
 may increase their faith;

And that they to whom the Scriptures have been given, and  
 the believers, may not doubt;

And that the infirm of heart and the unbelievers may say,  
 'What meaneth God by this parable?'

Thus God misleadeth whom He will, and whom He will  
 doth He guide aright; and none knoweth the armies of thy

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Lord but Himself: and this is no other than a warning to mankind.

Nay, by the Moon!

By the Night when it retreateth!

By the Morn when it brighteneth!

Hell is one of the most grievous woes,

Fraught with warning to man,

To him among you who desireth to press forward, or to remain behind.

For its own works lieth every soul in pledge. But they of God's right hand

In their gardens shall ask of the wicked,

'What hath cast you into Hell-fire?'

They will say, 'We were not of those who prayed,

And we were not of those who fed the poor,

And we plunged into vain disputes with vain disputers,

And we rejected as a lie the day of reckoning,

Till the certainty came upon us' -

And intercession of the interceders shall not avail them.

Then what hath come to them that they turn aside from the Warning

As if they were affrighted asses fleeing from a lion?

And every one of them would fain have open pages given to him out of Heaven.

It shall not be. They fear not the life to come.

It shall not be. For this Koran is warning enough. And whoso will, it warneth him.

But not unless God please, shall they be warned. Meet is He to be feared. Meet is forgiveness in Him.

#### (e) *Sura 2: The Prophets*

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This people's reckoning hath drawn nigh, yet, sunk in carelessness, they turn aside.

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

Every fresh warning that cometh to them from their Lord they only hear to mock it, —

Their hearts set on lusts: and they who have done this wrong say in secret discourse, 'Is He more than a man like yourselves? What! will ye, with your eyes open, accede to sorcery?'

SAY: 'My Lord knoweth what is spoken in the heaven and on the earth: He is the Hearer, the Knower.'

'Nay,' say they, 'it is the medley of dreams: nay, he hath forged it: nay, he is a poet: let him come to us with a sign as the prophets of old were sent.'

Before their time, none of the cities which we have destroyed, believed: will these men, then, believe?

And we sent none, previous to thee, but men to whom we had revealed ourselves. Ask ye the people who are warned by Scriptures, if ye know it not.

We gave them not bodies which could dispense with food: and they were not to live for ever.

Then made we good our promise to them; and we delivered them and whom we pleased, and we destroyed the transgressors.

And now have we sent down to you 'the book', in which is your warning: What, will ye not then understand?

And how many a guilty city have we broken down, and raised up after it other peoples:

And when they felt our vengeance, lo! they fled from it.

'Flee not,' said the angels in mockery, 'but come back to that wherein ye revelled, and to your abodes! Questions will haply be put to you.'

They said, 'Oh, woe to us! Verily we have been evil doers.'

And this ceased not to be their cry, until we made them like reaped corn, extinct.

We created not the heaven and the earth, and what is between them, for sport:

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Had it been our wish to find a pastime, we had surely found it in ourselves; – if to do so had been our will.

Nay, we will hurl the truth at falsehood, and it shall smite it, and lo! it shall vanish. But woe be to you for what ye utter of God!

All beings in the heaven and on the earth are His: and they who are in his presence disdain not his service, neither are they wearied:

They praise Him night and day: they rest not.

Have they taken gods from the earth who can quicken the dead?

Had there been in either heaven or earth gods besides God, both surely had gone to ruin. But glory be to God, the Lord of the throne, beyond what they utter!

He shall not be asked of his doings, but they shall be asked.

Have they taken other gods beside Him? SAY; bring forth your proofs that they are gods. This is the warning of those who are with me, and the warning of those who were before me: but most of them know not the truth, and turn aside.

No apostle have we sent before thee to whom we did not reveal that 'Verily there is no God beside me: therefore worship me.'

Yet they say, 'The God of Mercy hath begotten issue from the angels.' Glory be to Him! Nay, they are but His honoured servants:

They speak not till He hath spoken; and they do His bidding.

He knoweth what is before them and what is behind them; and no plea shall they offer

Save for whom He pleaseth; and they tremble for fear of Him.

And that angel among them who saith 'I am a god beside Him', will we recompense with hell: in such sort will we recompense the offenders.

Do not the infidels see that the heavens and the earth were both a solid mass, and that we clave them asunder, and that by means of water we give life to everything? Will they not then believe?

And we set mountains on the earth lest it should move with them, and we made on it broad passages between them as routes for their guidance;

And we made the heaven a roof strongly upholden; yet turn they away from its signs.

And He it is who hath created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each moving swiftly in its sphere.

At no time have we granted to man a life that shall last for ever: if thou then die, shall they live for ever?

Every soul shall taste of death: and for trial will we prove you with evil and with good; and unto Us shall ye be brought back.

And when the infidels see thee they receive thee only with scoffs: - 'What! is this he who maketh such mention of your gods?' Yet when mention is made to them of the God of Mercy, they believe not.

'Man,' say they, 'is made up of haste.' But I will show you my signs: desire them not then to be hastened.

They say, 'When will this threat be made good? Tell us, if ye be men of truth!

Did the infidels but know the time when they shall not be able to keep the fire of hell from their faces or from their backs, neither shall they be helped!

But it shall come on them suddenly and shall confound them; and they shall not be able to put it back, neither shall they be respited.

Other apostles have been scoffed at before thee: but that doom at which they mocked encompassed the scoffers.

SAY: Who shall protect you by night and by day from the God of Mercy? Yet turn they away from the warning of their Lord.

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Have they gods beside Us who can defend them? For their own succour have they no power; neither shall the gods they join with God screen them from Us.

Yes! we have given these men and their fathers enjoyments so long as their life lasted. What! see they not that we come to a land and straiten its borders? Is it they who are the conquerors?

SAY: I only warn you of what hath been revealed to me: but the deaf will not hear the call, whenever they are warned;

Yet if a breath of thy Lord's chastisement touch them, they will assuredly say, 'Oh! woe to us! we have indeed been offenders.'

Just balances will we set up for the day of the resurrection, neither shall any soul be wronged in aught; though, were a work but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, we would bring it forth to be weighed: and our reckoning will suffice.

We gave of old to Moses and Aaron the illumination and a light and a warning for the God-fearing.

Who dread their Lord in secret, and who tremble for 'the Hour'.

And this Koran which we have sent down is a blessed warning: will ye then disown it?

Of old we gave unto Abraham his direction, for we knew him worthy.

When he said to his Father and to his people, 'What are these images to which ye are devoted?

They said, 'We found our fathers worshipping them.'

He said, 'Truly ye and your fathers have been in a plain mistake.'

They said, 'Hast thou come unto us in earnest? or art thou of those who jest?'

He said, 'Nay, your Lord is Lord of the Heavens and of the Earth, who hath created them both; and to this am I one of those who witness:

— And, by God, I will certainly lay a plot against your idols, after ye shall have retired and turned your backs.'

So, he broke them all in pieces, except the chief of them, that to it they might return, inquiring.

They said, 'Who hath done this to our gods? Verily he is one of the unjust.'

They said, 'We heard a youth make mention of them: they call him Abraham.'

They said, 'Then bring him before the people's eyes, that they may witness against him.'

They said, 'Hast thou done this to our gods, O Abraham?'

He said, 'Nay, but their chief hath done it: but ask ye them, if they can speak.'

So they turned their thoughts upon themselves, and said, 'Ye truly are the impious persons.'

Then they became headstrong in their former error and exclaimed, 'Thou knowest that these speak not.'

He said, 'What! do ye then worship, instead of God, that which doth not profit you at all, nor injure you? Fie on you and on that ye worship instead of God! What! do ye not then understand?'

They said: 'Burn him, and come to the succour of your gods: if ye will do anything at all.'

We said, 'O fire! be thou cold, and to Abraham a safety!'

And they sought to lay a plot against him, but we made them the sufferers.

And we brought him and Lot in safety to the land which we have blessed for all human beings:

And we gave him Isaac and Jacob as a further gift, and we made all of them righteous:

We also made them models who should guide others by our command, and we inspired them with good deeds and constancy in prayer and almsgiving, and they worshipped us.

And unto Lot we gave wisdom, and knowledge; and we

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rescued him from the city which wrought filthiness; for they were a people evil, perverse:

And we caused him to enter into our mercy, for he was of the righteous.

And remember Noah when aforetime he cried to us and we heard him, and delivered him and his family from the great calamity;

And we helped him against the people who treated our signs as impostures. An evil people verily were they, and we drowned them all.

And David and Solomon; when they gave judgement concerning a field when some people's sheep had caused a waste therein; and we were witnesses of their judgement.

And we gave Solomon insight into the affair; and on both of them we bestowed wisdom and knowledge. And we constrained the mountains and the birds to join with David in our praise: Our doing was it!

And we taught David the art of making mail for you, to defend you from each other's violence: will ye therefore be thankful?

And to Solomon we subjected the strongly blowing wind: it sped at his bidding to the land we had blessed; for we know all things:

And sundry Satans who should dive for him and perform other work beside: and we kept watch over them.

And remember Job: When he cried to his Lord, 'Truly evil hath touched me: but thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy.'

So we heard him, and lightened the burden of his woe; and we gave him back his family, and as many more with them, - a mercy from us, and a memorial for those who serve us:

And Ismael, and Edris and Dhoulkefi - all steadfast in patience.



And we caused them to enter into our mercy; for they were of the righteous:

And Dhoulnoun; when he went on his way in anger, and thought that we had no power over him. But in the darkness he cried, 'There is no God but Thou: Glory be unto Thee! Verily, I have been one of the evil doers!'

So we heard him and rescued him from misery: for thus rescue we the faithful:

And Zacharias; when he called upon his Lord saying, 'O my Lord, leave me not childless: but there is no better heir than Thyself.'

So we heard him, and gave him John, and we made his wife fit for childbearing. Verily, these vied in goodness, and called upon us with love and fear, and humbled themselves before us.

And her who kept her maidenhood, and into whom we breathed of our spirit, and made her and her son a sign to all creatures.

Of a truth, this, your religion, is the one Religion, and I your Lord; therefore serve me:

But they have rent asunder this their great concern among themselves into sects. All of them shall return to us.

And whoso shall do the things that are right, and be a believer, his efforts shall not be disowned: and surely will we write them down for him.

There is a ban on every city which we shall have destroyed, that they shall not rise again,

Until a way is opened for Gog and Magog, and they shall hasten from every high land,

And this sure promise shall draw on. And lo! the eyes of the infidels shall stare amazedly; and they shall say, 'Oh, our misery! of this were we careless! yea, we were impious persons.'

Verily, ye, and what ye worship beside God, shall be fuel for hell: ye shall go down into it.

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Were these gods, they would not go down into it; but they shall all abide in it for ever.

Therein shall they groan; but nought therein shall they hear to comfort them.

But they for whom we have before ordained good things, shall be far away from it:

Its slightest sound they shall not hear: in what their souls longed for, they shall abide for ever:

The great terror shall not trouble them; and the angel shall meet them with, 'This is your day which ye were promised.'

On that day we will roll up the heaven as one rolleth up written scrolls. As we made the first creation, so will we bring it forth again. This promise bindeth us; verily, we will perform it.

And now, since the Law was given, have we written in the Psalms that 'My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth.'

Verily, in this Qur'ān is teaching for those who serve God.

We have not sent thee otherwise than as mercy unto all creatures.

SAY: Verily it hath been revealed to me that your God is one God; are ye then resigned to Him (Muslims)?

But if they turn their backs, then SAY: I have warned you all alike; but I know not whether that with which ye are threatened be nigh or distant.

God truly knoweth what is spoken aloud, and He also knoweth that which ye hide.

And I know not whether haply this delay be not for your trial, and that ye may enjoy yourselves for a time.

My Lord saith: Judge ye with truth; for our Lord is the God of Mercy – whose help is to be sought against what ye utter.

It may be as well to give in conclusion the principal passages from Sura 4, 'Women', and Sura 33, 'The Confederates', which

exhibit Mohammed's teaching about marriage and the status of women.

(1) *Sura 4.3*: And if ye are apprehensive that ye shall not deal fairly with orphans, then of other women who seem good in your eyes marry but two, three, or four; and if ye still fear that ye shall not act equitably, then one only; or the slaves whom ye have acquired. [The gist of this is: Don't marry too many women, unless you are quite sure that you can make provision for their children if the mothers die.]

(2) *Sura 4.38*: Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God hath gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them. Virtuous women are careful, obedient, during their husbands' absence, because God of them hath been careful. But chide those for whose refractoriness ye have cause to fear; remove them into beds apart, and scourge them. But if they are obedient to you, then seek not occasion against them: verily God is High, Great.

(3) *Sura 33.39*: O Prophet, we allow thee thy wives whom thou hast dowered, and the slaves whom thy right hand possesseth out of the booty which God hath granted thee; and the daughters of thy uncle, and of thy paternal and maternal aunts who fled with thee to Medina, and any believing woman who hath given herself up to the Prophet, if the Prophet desired to wed her – a privilege for thee above the rest of the faithful.

(ii) *Moslem tradition (Hadith)*

In spite of the supreme position accorded to the Qur'ān, it is not the only authority upon which Moslem faith and practice are based. Three further sources are recognized, *sunna* or tradition, *ijma* or the consensus of the accredited teachers, and *qiyas* or fair deduction. Of these the first has accumulated in the form of *hadith* or statements

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the whole of the *sunna* being embodied in one corpus, the Hadith. *Sunna* consists of sayings and actions recorded of the Prophet and handed down by reputable disciples of his. Obviously much room exists in this respect for fraudulent invention, but immense trouble has been taken by Moslem scholars to sift the wheat from the chaff. Thus in the third century after the Hijrah a doctor of Islamic lore in Bukhara is said to have amassed no fewer than 600,000 *hadith*, and to have rejected all of them but 7,275, which he regarded as sufficiently well authenticated. Each *hadith* is supposed to be certified by a catena or *isnad* of witnesses, by whose testimony it is handed back in a kind of apostolic succession to the lifetime of the Prophet. The *sunna* is embodied in six canonical books of *hadith*, which are accepted by Sunni but not by Shi'ah Moslems. The same rule as to abrogations is applicable to these *hadith* as to the suras of the Qu'rān, i.e. a later one may if necessary annul or cancel out an earlier one. Shi'ahs have five books of *hadith* of their own. No genuine *hadith* is held capable of being contrary to what appears in the suras of the Qur'ān. Unless therefore a good deal of subtlety is applied to the handling of *sunna*, it cannot very greatly alter the pattern of Mohammed's teaching, although it may amplify it to some degree.

A closer examination of the Hadith shows that a good many of the individual traditions are repeated more than once, so that the number of actual *hadith* reduces itself to fewer than 3,000. Of these it is reasonable to say, as the Italian scholar Santillana has put it, that there undoubtedly exists a genuinely authentic nucleus which reflects, if not always the exact words, at least the thought and practice of Mohammed and his companions, or the ancient Arab customs adopted by them and incorporated as they stood in primitive Islam. Apart from this nucleus, however, the Hadith must be held to contain materials which come from Jewish, Christian, and even Greek pagan sources, and it is not uncommon to find, as Goldziher has shown, that the sayings of Jesus himself have been put into the mouth of the Prophet.

Three *hadith* from the Bukhara collection are given below.

(a) *How the 'openings' of the Prophet came to him*

It hath been related to us by Abdallah ibn Yusuf: he said: 'It hath been imparted to us by Hisham ibn Urwa by his

father [who had it from Aisha, the mother of the faithful, i.e. Mohammed's wife] that al Harith ibn Hisham asked the Apostle of God, o.h.b.p.,\* and said: "O Apostle of God, how cometh the Revelation of God to thee?" – And the Prophet of God, o.h.b.p., answered and said: "That which most constraineth me cometh upon me like the sound of a bell. And when it leaveth me, I recall afterwards that which He hath said. On other occasions the angel [of Allah] appeareth unto me in the form of a man, and speaketh words to me, and I retain [in my memory] that which he hath said." And Aisha said: "I have seen him on very cold days, when the opening cometh upon him; and when it leaveth him, his brow is wet with his sweat."

(b) *That faith is more important than works*

Ubada hath reported that the Prophet, o.h.b.p., said: 'He who testifieth that there is no other god but Allah, and that he hath no equal, and that Mohammed is his servant and apostle, and that Jesus is his servant and apostle, his Word who was born of Mary, and that Paradise is the truth and that Hell is the truth – him will Allah admit to Paradise, whatsoever works he may have done on earth.'

(c) *That the fear of God is more important than works*

Abu Hurarira hath reported, that the Prophet, o.h.b.p., said: 'A man wasted his life. As his end drew nigh, he said to his children: "When I am dead, ye shall burn my body and scatter the dust thereof before the wind. For if Allah were to get hold of me, he would inflict on me a punishment such as none other hath suffered." And it came to pass that when he was dead, Allah commanded the earth: "Gather together what thou hast received of this man's body." And the earth

\* 'On him be peace': the usual reverential formula employed when Mohammed is mentioned.

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did so, and the man came forth before Allah. And Allah asked him: "What possessed thee that thou didst thus [i.e. ordered thyself to be cremated]?" – And the man answered: "It was from fear of Thee, O Allah." Then Allah forgave him.'

### NOTE ON MOSLEM SERMONS

Moslem sermons are of two main sorts: (1) official *khutbahs*; (2) unofficial exhortations, usually delivered on Thursdays, not necessarily in a mosque.

(1) These must be delivered from the *minbar*\* or mosque pulpit, usually on Friday at the time of the *salat*, and the preacher must be properly robed (the correct vestment varied at different periods) and must lean upon a weapon of some sort, to symbolize the fact that Islam is to be propagated or defended if necessary by force of arms. Other occasions for *khutbahs* are at weddings, after prayer on feast-days, on various public occasions, and in time of eclipses and droughts. The strict rule is that the *khutbah* must be in Arabic, but relaxation of this rule allows any vernacular that may be deemed necessary. The entire *khutbah* is held to consist of five parts, and thus includes a certain liturgical element similar to the Christian Bidding Prayer. According to orthodox lawyers it should begin with the *Bismillah* (Praise be to Allah), followed by a blessing on the Prophet, then an admonition to piety, followed by a blessing upon the believers, and finally a reading from the Qur'ān, which must be not less than a complete verse. It seems strange that the reading should come last on the list, but the order of recital is not the same as that of the catalogue, since the benediction of the believers is attached to the blessing upon the Prophet, while the reading from the Qur'ān goes with the sermon proper. In addition there was, during the first century of Islam, a

\* The word *minbar* is Ethiopic and it would seem that in Christian circles it meant 'the bishop's throne'. It was doubtless introduced in imitation of what had been seen in Abyssinian churches. The original *minbar* in Mohammed's own *masjid* was of tamarisk wood, and was mounted by two steps. Later *minbars* were more richly ornamented, and I understand that specimens of these are to be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. There is a fine one in the El Aksa mosque at Jerusalem.

liturgical cursing of the enemies of the Faith, and by the fourth century of the new religion the practice had become established of praying for the reigning sovereign. In the main, Moslem sermons of the official class are short, since Mohammed recommended brevity to preachers, and usually himself spoke 'ten words', the conventional phrase for a few sentences. The earliest classical edition of Moslem sermons gives discourses which would take about five minutes to deliver. Margoliouth says that many of them are simply exhortations to the sacred war or *jihad*. Often they are in rhymed prose, and it is clear that the preacher not infrequently did not compose his own sermon but memorized and delivered one of these stock discourses. Margoliouth says that this is the case in Egypt to-day.

(2) The unofficial preaching is said to have taken place sometimes in private houses, and the occasion might be the asking of a question by some pious individual, which would be followed by a reply given by some notable divine, perhaps a Sufi, who would deliver a kind of mission-sermon, as a result of which the congregation would be moved to violent emotion, 'some groaning, some shrieking' – the account reminds one of the stories of revival meetings which occur in John Wesley's *Diary*. The fullest account of such gatherings is to be found in the diary of Ibn Jubair, a visitor to Baghdad in A.H. 580. At that time the city was the scene of much preaching of an extremely earnest and eloquent character. The name usually given to such occasions is *majlis* or sitting. A sermon delivered in A.D. 687 by the most eloquent preacher of the day is partly in rhymed prose. It is said that most of the great Sufis were powerful preachers. The sermons of one of these saints, Abd el-Qadir al-Jilani, have been collected into a volume. These are in prose, and reach a high level of spirituality. Indeed it is claimed that al-Jilani made as many as 500 converts to Islam, and that he reformed more than 100,000 criminals.

Ibn Jubair's account of Baghdad in the thirteenth century says that scarcely a Friday passes without a discourse by a preacher, and those among the inhabitants who are specially favoured spend nearly their whole time in meetings where such are delivered. He records one of these occasions which he experienced at the Nizamiyyah College, where, after the *salat*, the shaik Qaswini ascended the pulpit; chairs were placed in front of him for the readers, who chanted passages

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from the Qur'ān, and after these readings the shaik delivered a powerful sermon; questions were then submitted to him on pieces of paper, and he answered them in turn. Another preacher, Jamal-ud-din Ibn al-Jauzi, held preaching services every Saturday. At these there were often scenes of excitement and emotion. Many sobbed and fainted, and crowds thronged to touch the preacher. On Thursdays this preacher held a private gathering in the court of the Khalifa's palace, which was attended by the Khalifa and his family. One curious feature is mentioned as evidently novel, that the preacher made his discourse rhyme with his text. The practice afterwards seems to have become common, and its effect was to make this type of *khutbah* a studied appeal to the emotions of the congregation. An eighth-century volume of Moslem sermons includes lengthy passages in verse which must have taken from twenty minutes to half an hour to deliver. Margoliouth records that in the year 1909 a collection of old Moslem sermons was published at Damascus for use in mosques. Many of these began in rhyme, but continued it only for about one-third of the entire sermon, and on the whole each separate discourse would have taken about five minutes to deliver.

### (iii) *Sufism*

This demands some attention here. Original Islam seems not to have had any place in it for ascetics or mystics such as we find in Christianity and Buddhism, although Mohammed's life as a *ḥanīf* was perhaps not unlike that of a Jewish Nazirite. In process of time however there developed orders not much different from those of monks or friars. This would seem to suggest once again that the primary influence in Islam was Jewish and the secondary Christian, since Judaism, like Zoroastrianism, is not an ascetic religion, and offers no encouragement to those who wish to live celibate lives, whether temporarily or permanently. Somewhere about a century after the time of the Prophet ascetic movements did develop in Islam, and these were the parents of the communities called Sufis, probably from the grey or white wool garments worn by them (*suf*=wool). No doubt Oriental Christian influence is to be seen at work here. It was not until about 150 years later that this asceticism became



associated with mystical theology, perhaps of the type of Plotinus, and the specific doctrines and technique of the Sufis and Darwishes began to show themselves. According to Nicholson 'the ascetic and quietistic spirit, though still strong, is overpowered by speculative and pantheistic tendencies, which had hitherto remained in the background, but now assert themselves with increasing boldness.'

In relation to our subject the really important contribution of Sufism to Moslem worship is the development of *dhikr*. The word itself, meaning 'praise', occurs in the Qur'ān, and the practice of such praise of Allah is enjoined there upon the faithful. But Sufis, both early and later ones, stressed *dhikr* as supplementary to *salat*, since *dhikr* could be indulged in at all times, and not merely at the five canonical periods, and indeed could be continuously practised for hours at a time. Sufism may therefore just be said to have added to Islam two more kinds of worship, *dhikr* proper, which consists usually in the recitation or intoning of some sacred formula such as *Lá i-lá-ha il Al-láh*, and meditation, to which *dhikr* may be preparatory.

The place of Sufism in Islam is a little curious. Some have said that it seeks to fill up all the gaps left by Mohammed in the satisfaction of the religious needs of his disciples. Its tenets are certainly extremely latitudinarian. Although the theology of the different branches and orders may vary, it has, I believe, been said correctly that Sufism treats all positive religions as useful for reaching contact with Reality – some perhaps better than others, but all of some service; and further that Sufis regard Paradise, Hell, and the dogmas of positive religions as only so many allegories. These facts, taken together with the special mysticism of the Sufis, seem to suggest not only that Sufism does not properly belong inside Islam, but also that its origin may reasonably be looked for in the direction of India, since Hinduism, especially at the present day, has had mystics who have declared their appreciation of all religions. The hybrid constructions of Kabir and Nanak, to mention only two, seem to breathe the same tolerant atmosphere as that of fully developed Sufism. It is perhaps rather to the credit of Islam that it has consented to retain Sufism within its fold, since it has thereby been enabled to satisfy the spiritual hunger of many souls who would have found the naked and original prophetism and legalism of the Qur'ān rather meagre fare.

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No one is supposed to be recognized as a Sufi who has not passed through the proper novitiate, and been admitted to one of the recognized orders; but Sufism is not all of one grade, since the Sufi (if he likes) need not permanently remain in the community, but may even marry, and live outwardly an ordinary life in the world, practising his spiritual exercises in secret. He may thus approximate to the status of a tertiary of the Franciscans, or to that of a lay associate of the Jesuits.

For our purpose it is chiefly necessary to survey the main methods of spiritual exercise, since this will give us not only a picture of Moslem worship on a wider scale than that of the *masjid* or mosque, but will also demonstrate the way in which Moslems have after their own fashion sought to achieve greater spiritual depth, and so to balance in their own way the two poles of objectivity and inwardness, though in this case they have not to set the latter against ritual sacrifice but merely against the formalism of the ordinary *salat*. The aim and object of Sufi exercise is union with Allah. Thus the transcendence of the original Moslem *wahj* gives way to immanentism, and the interpenetration of the soul and God.

Sufi exercises are avowedly undertaken with the object of forming character, and especially of altering the sense of values held by the individual. There are generally considered to be four stages, though sometimes there are seven. In one famous allegory these are called the seven valleys:

The valley of search, or renunciation of earthly possessions  
and setting out on the pilgrimage.

The valley of love, or kindling with ardour for God the  
Beloved.

The valley of knowledge or illumination.

The valley of independence or detachment.

The valley of unity, or contemplation of the Divine  
Essence.

The valley of amazement, or torment at failure to achieve  
union.

The valley of the annihilation of self.

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This final stage is sometimes called *fana* or 'passing away', and would seem to correspond very closely to the Buddhist Nirvana.\* To what extent such complete union is possible for anyone engaged in social service or mundane activity it is hard to decide. It would seem as though the mountain peaks of ecstasy must inevitably have lowlands between them.

The objects of meditation are chiefly the Name and attributes of Deity as conceived by Mohammed and set forth in the Qur'ān. The rosary may be used, and the Beautiful Names recited; and many different devices are employed, as well as music, for the purpose of inducing an exalted state of consciousness. The piety of primitive Islam was almost dour in its puritanical simplicity, and modern Wahhabis have striven to revert to this severity. For a long time both the pictorial arts and music were excluded, and there is evidence of a very considerable heart-searching over the introduction of the latter. Gradually however the various arts came to have their appropriate Moslem forms of expression, † and nowhere more than in the Moslem orders of zealots. Indeed the latter have especially contended for the propriety of music auditions as an aid to that divine ecstasy in which one can attain to ultimate truth and reality. In the ninth century Ibn Abi'l-Dunyā wrote a treatise which linked musical audition with gambling, drunkenness, and fornication, as among the forbidden pleasures. In opposition to this the famous mystical writer al-Ghazzali and his brother, Majd-al-Din, defended music. The earliest plea for the latter is a remarkable treatise called *The Unique Necklace*, in which the central chapters, especially what is known as 'The Chapter of the

\* There is a curious story of a Sufi saint, Ibrahim-al-Khauwas, who was seated beneath a tree when a lion approached him. His companion fled up the tree, but Ibrahim merely lay down, closed his eyes, and kept still. The lion sniffed him over, and then departed. The next night the two friends were sleeping in a mosque, when a bug fell from the rafters on to Ibrahim's face and bit him, so that he cried out. His companion exclaimed, 'Yesterday you were not troubled at the lion, but to-night you cry out at a bug.' 'Yes,' replied Ibrahim, 'that is true, but yesterday I was with Allah the most High. To-night I am only with myself.'

† Thus the *minbar* became highly decorated, as for example in the great mosque at Kairwan, while the fourteenth mosque of Sultan Hasan at Cairo has a ground-plan almost as elaborate as that of Westminster Cathedral.

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Second Ruby', deal with the claim of musical audition to be a legitimate adjunct to the life of the devout Moslem. Part of this work was published in translation in 1941 by Mr H. G. Farmer, in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. The author, Ibn Abd Rabbihi, deals first with the origin of singing, and argues cleverly from the Qur'ān and the Hadith that it has the approval of the Prophet. He then goes on to give quotations of similar passages which also show the propriety of musical instruments. Thus 'it is related of David the prophet (on him be peace) that he had a cithara on which he would play when he read them Psalms, in order that the jinn, and men, and birds, might gather to him. Then he wept, and those around him wept also. And the people of the Book (i.e. the Jews) find this in their books.' In another passage the author demonstrates that the religious objection to singing is not to musical noises, but to the distorting of the face and the deformation of the mouth by those who produce their voices in an unpleasing manner.

The consequence of all this is that music has ultimately been accorded a place in religious devotions, at any rate so far as Sufis are concerned, and al-Ghazzali, in a work which was translated some forty years earlier, gives seven occasions when music is fitting for Moslems, of which only three are strictly religious, unless one includes the occasion of *jihad* or holy war. These seven are:

- (1) for pilgrims, who go around the country before they set out for Mecca, stirring up longing for the Holy Place;
- (2) for warriors urging men to battle;
- (3) in battle;
- (4) music of lamentation for sins (but not for death – since death comes at the Will of Allah);
- (5) at marriages and feasts;
- (6) by lovers;
- (7) to arouse longing for God.

Miss Tillyard remarks: 'Moslem sacred music, as I have heard it, is of a particularly thrilling and poignant nature. Just as the sound of the bagpipes seems to awaken in the listener a longing to perform deeds of primitive and barbaric physical courage, so the Moslem chant excites desires for spiritual heroism. Indescribably emotional, the

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music yet has a keen and ascetic undertone, a sharp tang of suffering tempering the soft melody of ecstasy. It seems to contrast the cool pure joys of the spirit, which are only to be quaffed from the cup of pain, with the sickly delights of earthly pleasure. To the Sufi the chant is a challenge, a call, and a judgement.' (Some of us will no doubt remember the description in Lord Tweedsmuir's *Greenmantle* of the magical music employed by the Companions of the Rosy Hours – who, it will be recalled, were an order of Turkish Dervishes. This is a perfectly correct episode so far as detail goes.) The Darwish or Dervish (the name means 'poor') is a member of a Sufi order. Each order may have its own methods of ceremonial piety, but the commonest is that of standing in a circle and then rotating. Sometimes they will sit in the form of an ellipse, and chant at an increasing pace. Others will sit on the ground in silence, with their gaze concentrated. Others meditate kneeling. Some of the exercises, such as meditation upon certain centres of light which are said to exist in the body, seem to be derived from the yoga-systems of India. Another method of concentration is that of gazing at a mirror. These latter may be called auto-hypnotic meditations. There are others of a more intellectual order, which resemble some of those prescribed in the systems of Hinayana Buddhist meditation.

### *Sufi poems*

The following remarkable passage occurs in the works of an Arab poet, Ibn al-Farid (fl. 1182–1235), and shows the universalism which is characteristic of many Sufis. Poems such as this have not actually been collected into an authoritative sacred book, but are nevertheless much revered by Sufis themselves.

Virtually no hand but mine tied the infidel's girdle: and if it  
be loosed in acknowledgement of me, 'twas my hand that  
loosed it.

And if the niche of a mosque is illuminated by the Qur'ān,  
yet is no altar of a church made vain by the Gospel:

Nor vain are the books of the Torah revealed to Moses for his  
people, whereby the Rabbis converse with God every  
night:

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And if a devotee fall down before the stones of an idol-temple,  
there is no reason for religious zeal to take offence;

For many a one who is clear of the shame of associating others  
with God by means of idolatry, is in spirit a worshipper of  
money.

The warning from Me hath reached those whom it hath  
sought, and I am the Cause of the excuses put forth in every  
faith.

Not in any religion have men's eyes been awry, not in any  
sect have their thoughts been perverse.

They that heedlessly fell in love with the Sun lost not the way,  
forasmuch as its brightness is from the light of My unveiled  
splendour. And if the Magicians adored the fire – which a  
history tells us was not quenched for a thousand years –

They intended none but Me, although they took another  
direction, and did not declare the purpose they had formed.

They had once seen the radiance of My light, and deemed it  
fire, so that they were led away from the True Light by the  
rays.

And but for the screen of existence, I should have said it out:  
only my observance of the laws imposed on phenomena  
doth keep me silent.

So this is not aimless sport, nor were the creatures created to  
stray at random, albeit their actions were not right.

Their affairs take the course according to the brand of the  
Names; and the wisdom which endoweth essence with  
diverse attributes caused them to take that course in con-  
sequence of the Divine Decree.

The reference here to 'The Names' is to the two Divine Names of  
Allah as (i) *al-Hadi*, He who guides aright, and (ii) *al-Mudil*, He who  
leads astray. Ibn Farid's conclusion is not that all types of religious  
striving after God are looked upon by Him with compassion and  
favour, but rather that since they are in themselves all forms of His  
Activity, He cannot frown on them.

This second quotation is from the Divani of Shamsi Tabriz, and shows how in lyric ecstasy the condition of *fana*, or negation of Individuality, is reached. Plainly the influence of *advaita* Hinduism is to be seen here.

Lo – for I to myself am unknown – now in God's Name what must I do? –

I adore not the Cross nor the Crescent, I am not a Giaour or a Jew.

East nor West, land nor sea is my home, I have kin nor with angel nor gnome.

I am wrought not of fire nor of foam, I am shaped not of dust nor of dew.

I was born not in China afar, not in Saqsin, and not in Bulghar: Not in India, where the five rivers are, nor Iraq nor Khorasan I grew.

Not from Eden and Rizwan I fell, not from Adam my lineage I drew.

In a place beyond uttermost Place, in a tract without shadow of trace,

Soul and body transcending, I live in the soul of My Loved One anew.

(iv) *Bahā'ism*

For the sake of completeness, it seems only right that reference should be made here to the Babi and Baha'i movements, which arose in the early 19th century in Persia as derivatives from Shi'a Islam. The original founder, a young man claiming to be a descendant of the Quraish, called Mirzā 'Ali Muhammad, said that he was the current Manifestation of a 'hidden Imam' or successor to the Prophet's nephew, Ali, the preceding eleven Imams being actual descendants of Ali's younger son, Al Husayn. He declared himself in 1844, and was put to death in 1850, after appointing as his successor a lad of 20, Mirza Yahya, who had a half-brother somewhat older than himself, called Bahā'ullah. The youthfulness of Mirza Yahya led to a good deal of the affairs of the Babi community being conducted by

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Bahā'ullah. Eventually, in 1867, the latter openly announced that he himself was the true successor to Mirzā 'Ali Muhammad. There was a violent quarrel between the two half-brothers and their supporters, and each charged the other with attempts at poisoning. Eventually the Turkish government separated the two protagonists and exiled them, but not before some persons on both sides had been killed.

After these not very edifying proceedings, the main power came to rest in the hands of Bahā'ullah and his supporters. Bahā'ullah asserted that the original Bab, Mirzā 'Ali Muhammad, was nothing more than his harbinger, (a sort of Shi'a John the Baptist) and that he himself was a new and transcendent manifestation of God – not simply a prophet like Muhammad, but a quasi-divine Being, carrying still further the succession which began with Abraham, and destined to be followed by other Revelations: and he made his appeal to all people, and not simply to Moslems. The next step was the conversion to Baha'ism of a Syrian called Ibrahim George Khayru'llah, who had learnt English, and had married an English wife. In 1892 he went to the so-called Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and lectured there, attracting a good deal of attention. This has led to the development of a community of Baha'is in America, numbering some thousands, and to the erection of a huge Baha'i temple at Evanston, Minnesota.

The Baha'is now regard themselves as members of a new religion, and not as Moslems. They possess an extensive sacred literature, some of it composed by Mirzā 'Ali Muhammad, and some of it by Mirza Yahya, but most of it by Bahā'ullah, in the form of epistles, which are regarded by Baha'is as of the nature of verbal revelations, and are extremely numerous. The followers of Bahā'ullah have split into two sects, the larger being led by Abdu'l Bahā, and the smaller by his brother, Muhammad Ali. There is another large temple at Haifa.

Baha'ism, apart from its not very satisfactory early history, possesses some teachings which are salutary, even though not original. It is said to be dwindling in the Middle East, and shows no sign of being able to supersede Christianity as a universal religion. Indeed an impartial observer in 1931 declared that the conversion of a Moslem to Baha'ism, so far from being an advance, was actually a step on the road to materialism, and that Baha'ism as a religion did not stand very high. The idea of an *hereditary* religious leader, though common



enough in the Middle East, does not seem generally attractive. In general, the teaching seems to be a kind of Asian Unitarianism, with a strong emphasis upon world-peace. There seems to be a vigorous effort at the present time, probably subsidized from America, to further the claims of Baha'ism, and the number of its adherents is said to be on the increase.

*Note 1.* The following quotation from the recent work of Père Daniélou, *The Salvation of the Nations*, may serve well to end this section: 'One can stifle from lack of prayer just as one can stifle from lack of air. Our Western world in its restless and activistic life has completely lost this sense of prayer. That is why there are so many mentally ill and eccentric in our midst: people don't pray enough. There is a well of silence within themselves to which they have no access, a domain of peace they know not how to enter. Islam has held on to these things.'

*Note 2.* A valuable treatise called *The Qur'ān as Scripture* was composed in 1952 by Arthur Jeffery, Professor of Semitic Languages at Columbia University, New York. It is not only an excellent critical account of the Qur'ān in particular, but contains some valuable remarks upon sacred books in general.

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### THE GRANTH SAHIB

This is the sacred corpus of literature belonging to the Sikh community. In the 1941 census the Sikhs were enumerated at about 5½ millions, four-fifths of them being in the Punjab. Since the creation of Pakistan they have been faced with new problems, but they still exist as a separate religious body. The Granth consists very largely of devotional hymns, arranged in groups under the headings of their various authors, such as Nanak, Kabir, Jaidev, Namdev, and so on. At the beginning is a long series of aphorisms called the *Japji*, which every Sikh is supposed to know by heart, and parts of which are to be recited early in the morning daily. This is believed to be the work of Nanak in his old age. Following the *Japji* is the *Asa Kī War*, which is

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also mostly a collection of Nanak's sayings, and which is for additional use in the morning. Then come the *Rahiras*, hymns by different gurus, which are used for daily evening service.

Three extracts are here given, showing the beauty and loftiness of the Sikh doctrine of God. The first two are from the *Japji*. The third is from the hymns of Nanak.

It is regrettable to have to say that many Sikhs do not and cannot now learn and memorize the Granth. It is in a special dialect called Gurmukhi, with which many are not now familiar, and it is to be feared that there is a growing lukewarmness about this formerly very active religious movement. Those readers who find its teaching attractive should remember that it is the fruit of hybridization between Islam and Hinduism, and that through Islam Nanak and his followers found contact with Hebrew ideas of God, and also with that peculiar blend of Moslem and neo-Platonic piety called Sufism (see page 303).

### (i) *From the Japji*

There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent; by the favour of the Guru (REPEAT HIS NAME).

The True One was in the beginning; the True One was in the primal age.

The True One is now also, O Nanak; the True One also shall be.

\*

By thinking I cannot obtain a conception of Him, even though I think hundreds of thousands of times.

Even though I be silent and keep my attention firmly fixed on Him, I cannot preserve silence.

The hunger of the hungry for God subsideth not though they obtain the load of the worlds.

If man should have thousands and hundreds of thousands of devices, even one would not assist him in obtaining God.

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How shall man become true before God? How shall the veil of falsehood be rent?

By walking, O Nanak, according to the will of the Commander as preordained.

\*

By His order bodies are produced; His order cannot be described.

By His order souls are infused into them; by His order greatness is obtained.

By His order men are high or low; by His order they obtain preordained pain or pleasure.

By His order some obtain their reward; by His order others must ever wander in transmigration.

All are subject to His order; none is exempt from it.

He who understandeth God's order, O Nanak, is never guilty of egoism.

### (ii) *Passages from hymns by Nanak*

If I please Him, that is my place of pilgrimage to bathe in; if I please Him not, what ablutions shall I make?

What can all the created beings I behold obtain without previous good acts?

Precious stones, jewels, and gems shall be treasured up in thy heart if thou hearken to even one word of the Guru.

The Guru hath explained one thing to me –

That there is but one Bestower on all living beings; may I not forget him!

\*

Were man to live through the four ages, yea ten times longer;

Were he to be known on the nine continents, and were everybody to follow in his train;

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Were he to obtain a great name and praise and renown in the world;

If God's look of favour fell not on him, no one would notice him.

He would be accounted a worm among worms, and even sinners would impute sin to him.

\*

The Name is nectar in the heart as well as in the mouth:  
Through it man is freed from worldly desires.

Man cometh in the course of nature and goeth in the course of nature.

Man is born according to the desires of his heart, and he is absorbed in the same way.

The pious man is emancipated and falleth into no entanglements:

He is delivered by meditation on the Word and by God's name.

Many birds roost by night on a tree –

Some happy, others unhappy – they whose minds have worldly love perish.

When night hath passed away, they gaze upon the sky:

They fly in every direction according to the destiny recorded for them.

They who are associated with the Name deem the world like a meeting-place of cowherds:

The poisonous vessels of lust and wrath have burst for them.

To those without the capital of the Name houses and shops are empty;

But by meeting the Guru the adamant doors of their understanding are opened.

A holy man is met by primal destiny.

God's perfect people are rendered happy by truth:

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They barter their souls and bodies for divine knowledge and God's love.

Nanak toucheth their feet.

\*

O woman in the prime of youth, my Beloved is playful.

When a wife entertaineth great love for her Spouse, He mercifully taketh delight in her and enjoyeth her.

The wife shall meet her Spouse if the Lord God Himself show her favour.

Her bed is pleasant in the company of her Beloved; her seven tanks are filled with nectar.

Show me compassion and kindness, O Compassionate One, that I may obtain the true Word and sing Thy praises.

Nanak, the young woman, having seen God her Spouse, is delighted and her heart is enraptured.

O young woman, beautiful without art, pray only for the love of the one God.

God is pleasing to my soul and body, and I am charmed with his companionship.

She who is dyed with God's love and prayeth to Him, shall abide in happiness through His name.

When thou embracest virtue thou shalt know God; virtue shall abide with thee and vice be put to flight.

Without Thee I cannot abide for a moment; I derive no satisfaction from merely conversing of Thee.

Nanak, she whose tongue and heart are moistened with God's essence, calleth for her Beloved.

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### MANICHAEAN LITERATURE

Since Manichaeism, although a post-biblical religion, is, so far as can be ascertained, dead to-day, there is good excuse for omitting

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extracts from its sacred books. Yet it would be unfair to ignore the existence of a corpus of works attributed to Mani, and apparently treated by his disciples as quite as authoritative as the New Testament. The chief of these was known as the *Fihrist*, and it contains Mani's account of the creation of the world, according to his peculiar dualistic theology. It begins: 'Mani teaches, In the beginning of the world there were two entities, the one Light, the other Darkness, both separated the one from the other.' We possess also a short confession by Mani, which begins:

'A thankful scholar am I  
Born I am out of the land of Babel.'

Much Manichæan literature has come to light in recent years, both in Egypt and at Turfan in Turkestan, and the most recent account of all this is that given by M. Puech, the French scholar, in a short monograph published by the Musée Guimet, which he hopes to follow up with a more detailed work for the learned. Letters attributed to Mani are plainly modelled in imitation of the Pauline epistles.

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### JAPANESE SACRED LITERATURE (SHINTO)

In Japan, official religious documents other than Buddhist have the peculiar feature of being post-biblical in date. They are also said to be regarded not as the embodiment of revealed truth, but as ordinary literary works. It is said that written script was unknown in Japan before the fifth century A.D. and that no Shinto documents exist earlier than the eighth century. This does not imply any Christian influence, but rather Buddhist. After the entry of Buddhist ideas and literature from China, Japanese non-Buddhists appear to have been seized with the desire to have some religious compilations of their own, and to put into writing the ancient beliefs they held about the divine ancestry of their rulers and the myths of the various gods of the Shinto pantheon. It is curious to note that Shinto itself (= *shen-tao*,

or the way of the gods) is actually a Chinese word, the native name being *Kami-no-michi*, or the way of the *Kami* or *numina*. The oldest Shinto compilation is the *Kojiki* or 'Records of Ancient Matters', completed in A.D. 712. This was followed a few years later by the *Nihongi*. Both these are the transcripts of alleged tradition concerning the creation of the world and the early history of Japan, and are so full of myth and legend that in the middle of the nineteenth century a number of Shinto writers attempted to apply to them the allegorical method, after the manner of Plutarch and Philo. One individual writer, Genchi Kato, endeavours to construct a theory which would land Shintoists in a sort of Comtist positivism. Religion, he says, is theanthropic, involving such a complete oneness of humanity and divinity as to obliterate any distinction between the two.

Apart from this, however, Shinto does recognize officially a duality between the Divine and the human in its term for direct inspiration, *kangakari* or 'god-possession'. But this has nothing to do with the canonical literature mentioned above, and only refers to the occasional inspiration of seers, mostly connected with some Shinto shrine. Yet it must be clear that *kangakari* opens the way for the emergence of prophetic personalities, and during the earlier part of the nineteenth century several such personalities actually did arise in Japan, forming communities known as sect-Shinto, as distinct from state-Shinto, which was centred upon the worship of the Mikado or Emperor as the representative of the nation, and the symbol of the union between mankind and the Kami.

Among these prophets were three, Munetada, Kawate Bunjiro, and Maekama Miki, of whom I have given some account in a previous volume (see pages 197-200 of *Comparative Religion*).

I give below a few extracts in illustration of the foregoing remarks. First, three short paragraphs from the *Kojiki*, showing its mythical character. Second a few *logia* by Munetada, which demonstrate his attachment to polytheism. Third, and perhaps the most important, some of the *logia* attributed to Kawate Bunjiro. The society which he founded, now known as the Konko kyo, claims to be monotheist, and, as such, a serious rival to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It also claims a membership approaching three million adherents, and has offshoots in Malaya and on the Pacific coast of America. Clearly at

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the present time it is making a bid to become the national religion of the non-Buddhist Japanese, and may even try to convert Buddhists. Whether it will succeed is another matter, but it certainly deserves attention, and its recent publications are numerous, and include an English translation of the sacred scriptures, i.e. the sayings of the founder. Expert Japanese scholars say that Bunjiro had no sort of contact with Christianity. It is difficult to establish this, but the probability seems considerable, and in any case the *logia* are in a colloquial Japanese such as would have been spoken by a peasant farmer, while the commentaries published by the sect at a later date are in literary Japanese, and betray Christian influence. It would seem therefore that Bunjiro himself is somewhat to be compared to the Iranian prophet Zarathustra in his position between an ethnic polytheism and a full monotheism. If however his sayings are original, they show a greater approximation to sentiments found elsewhere only within the circle of Christianity than occur in the sayings of any other non-Christian teacher.

My last extract is from the teachings of Maekawa Miki, who has sometimes been called a Japanese Mrs Eddy.

### (i) *From the Kojiki*

(a) In ancient times there were two *kami* called Izanagi-no-Mikoto and Izanami-no-Mikoto. They opened up the Great-Eight-Island-Country. Their child, Amaterasu-Ōmikami, ruled over Takama-ga-Hara, and, like the sun, shed mercies on all things everywhere. Her brother, Susa-no-Wo-no-Mikoto, went down to Izumo and subdued the Eight-forked Dragon. He also went back and forth to Korea.

(b) Then Izanagi-no-Mikoto drew the ten-hand-breadth sword which he wore and cut off the head of his child, Kagu-Tsuchi-no-Kami. Thereupon the blood at the point of the sword bespattered and adhered to the multitudinous rock-clusters and deities were born named Iwa-Saku-no-Kami, next Ne-Saku-no-Kami, and next Iwa-Tsutsu-no-Wo-no-



Kami. Again, the blood at the upper part of the sword be-spattered and adhered to the multitudinous rock-clusters and deities were born named Mika-no-Hayabi-no-Kami, next Hi-no-Hayabi-no-Kami and next Take-Mikadzuchi-no-Wo-no-Kami. Another name for this last deity is Take-Futsu-no-Kami. Another name is Toyo-Futsu-no-Kami. Again the blood that gathered on the hilt of the sword came dripping out between his fingers and deities were born named Kura-Okami-no-Kami and Kura-Midzuha-no-Kami.

(c) When Izanagi-no-Mikoto had returned [from the Lower World], he was seized with regret, and said, 'Having gone to Nay! a hideous and filthy place, it is meet that I should cleanse my body from its pollutions.' He accordingly went to the plain of Ahagi at Tachibana in Wodo in Hiuga of Tsukushi, and purified himself. Thereafter, a deity was produced by his washing his left eye, which was called Amaterasu-no-Oho-Kami. Then he washed his right eye, producing thereby a deity who was called Tsukiyomi-no-Mikoto. Then he washed his nose, producing thereby a God who was called Sosa-no-Wo-no-Mikoto. In all there were three deities. Then Izanagi-no-Mikoto gave charge to his three children, saying, 'Do thou, Amaterasu-no-Oho-Kami, rule the plain of High Heaven; do thou, Tsukiyomi-no-Mikoto, rule the eight-hundred-fold tides of the ocean plain; do thou, Sosa-no-Wo-no-Mikoto, rule the world.'

(ii) *Sayings by Munetada*

When the Heart of Amaterasu-Ōmikami and the heart of man are one, this is eternal life.

When the Heart of Amaterasu-Ōmikami and our hearts are undivided, then there is no such thing as death.

When we realize that all things are the activity of Heaven, then we know neither pain nor care.

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Forsake flesh and self and will, and cling to the One Truth of Heaven and Earth.

When one knows the power (*toku*) of Amaterasu-Ōmikami, then whether one sleeps or whether one wakes, how joyful one is.

Happy is the man who cultivates the things that are hidden (*naki-mono*) and lets the things that are apparent (*ara-mono*) take care of themselves.

Of a truth there is no such thing as sickness.

If you foster a spirit that regards both good and evil as blessings then the body spontaneously becomes healthy.

In truth the Way is easy. He who abandons self-knowledge and spends his days in thankfulness grows neither old nor weary. He knows only joy and happiness.

Oh the joy of those who take as their guide the teaching of the Way of the Gods; for them there is neither youth nor age.

True selfhood is found in that which seems to be and is not. Wander not in the non-existent; let the heart be in the unseen.

Both heaven and hell come from one's own heart. Oh the sadness of wandering in the devil's prayers.

If in one's heart one is *kami*, then one becomes a *kami*; if in one's heart one is Buddha, then one becomes a Buddha; if in one's heart one is a serpent, then one becomes a serpent.

If the heart is open, then there is no such thing as pain. Thus one will find only happiness and thankfulness in all things.

Both happiness and suffering come from the heart – the world will be what you make it.

There is nothing in all the world so interesting as error, for without error there would be no happiness.

One should make the separated-spirit (*bun-shin*) of Amaterasu-Ōmikami [i.e. the human soul] full and not lacking. When the spirit of cheerfulness is weakened, then the spirit of depression prevails. Where the spirit of depression prevails,

## SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

there is defilement. Defilement is a withering of the spirit (*kegare wa ki-kare ni te*). It dries up the Spirit of Light.

\*

Oh how I long to make known quickly to all the people of the world the great power of Amaterasu-Ōmikami.

\*

Nothing in all the world calls forth such gratitude as sincerity. Through oneness in sincerity the men of the four seas are brothers.

\*

All men [lit. all within the four seas] are brothers. All receive the blessings of the same Heaven. The suffering of others is my suffering; the good of others is my good.

\*

One head was strong and the other was weak. Whenever the weak head obtained food and was about to eat it, the strong one always stole it and thus the weak one never once had food. Then one day the weak head rose up in wrath, laid hold on some poison and made as if to eat it. Then the strong head stole this as before and ate it and immediately died. Then the weak head, since it was of one body with the other, also immediately died.

\*

It is evil:

1. That one born in the Land of the Gods should be ever without faith.
2. That one should give way to anger or become worried about things.
3. That one should grow puffed up and should look down on others.

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4. That by looking on the evil of others one should increase within himself a heart of evil.
5. That one should neglect his work in time of health.
6. That one who has entered upon the Way of Sincerity should lack sincerity in his own heart.
7. That one should fail to find daily occasion for gratitude.

\*

1. Loosen not thy hold on sincerity.
2. Commit thyself to heaven.
3. Separate thyself from self.
4. Be joyful.
5. Lay hold on Living Being.

### (iii) *Logia from the Gorikai of Kawate Bunjiro*

Whether or not you receive spiritual power in prayer depends on your own sincerity.

Do not bring bitterness to your own heart by anger at the things that are past.

Do not profess love with your lips while you harbour hatred in your heart.

God is the keeper of heaven and earth: separation from him is impossible.

The believer should have a faith which makes him a friend of God. He should not have a faith which makes him afraid of God. Come near to God.

(*Sacred admonition*) One should not speak sincerity with his mouth and lack sincerity in his heart.

(*Sacred admonition*) One should not be mindful of suffering in his own life and unmindful of suffering in the lives of others.

God is the Great Parent of your real self. Faith is just like filial obedience to your parents.

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God is the Great Parent of your real self. Faith is just like filial obedience to your parents.

Free yourself from doubt. Open and behold the great broad Way of Truth. You will find your life quickened in the midst of the goodness of God.

With God there is neither day nor night, neither far nor near. Pray to him straightforwardly and with a heart of faith.

If you lean on a staff of metal it will bend, and wood and bamboo will break, but if you take God for your staff all will be easy.

God has no voice and his form is unseen. If you start to doubt then doubt has no end. Free yourself from fearful doubt.

With sincerity there is no such thing as failure. When failure to accomplish your purpose in prayer arises then know that something is lacking in sincerity.

Bring not suffering upon yourself by indulgence in selfishness.

If you would enter the Way of Truth, first of all drive away the clouds of doubt from your heart.

One who would walk in the Way of Truth must close the eyes of the flesh and open the eyes of the spirit.

Put away your passions and your greed and learn the True Way.

Do not worry, but believe in God.

In all the world there is no such thing as a stranger.

By your own attitudes you can bring yourself life or you can bring yourself death.

Your body is not for your own freedom.

No matter how thankfully one may read his rituals and make his purifications, if there is no sincerity within the heart, it is the same as lying to God. The vain making of a big noise by the clapping of hands avails nothing, for even a little sound is heard by God. It is not necessary to speak in a loud voice or to practise intonations in prayer. Pray just as if you were talking to another human being.

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### (iv) *From the teachings of Maekawa Miki*

Stop a bit. I have something to say.  
Listen to what God says. I speak not that which is false.  
Taking as my pattern Heaven and Earth of this universe,  
I have made wife and husband.  
This is the beginning of this world.  
I sweep away evil and am in haste to save you all.  
When once the world has been made clean, then the Sweet-  
dew Altar [shall appear].  
I look down the range of the myriad of ages  
And there is not one who has understood my heart.  
Thus it must be, for no one has ever told you.  
It is not without cause that you have not known.  
But now God is revealed before you  
And sets forth a matter completely.  
Though you are told that this place is Jiba of Yamato, the  
Home of God,  
Yet you do not understand the reason.  
When one has thoroughly learned the reason,  
Whoever he is, he begins to long for the Home.  
If you wish to learn, and if you search me out, I will teach  
you thoroughly  
About the reason for all things.  
When God appears and teaches you a matter completely,  
Then the whole world is inspired with courage.  
I am in haste to save you all and that right speedily.  
So take courage, O hearts of the world.

\*

Sincerity is the attitude of an awakened spirit that has been swept clean of the eight dusts and made free from evil fate. Your true self is spirit and this is sincerity itself. Sincerity when



it works naturally is truth. Truth, therefore, is the principle of your spirit. And since your spirit is a part of the Spirit of God, the principle of your spirit is the Principle of Heaven. Thus, the truth of the heart of sincerity is the Truth of God Himself, and sincerity which is revealed in truth is communion with God. 'Of all the thoughts and acts which come before me,' says God, 'if only there be a little sincerity, if only a bit of the Truth of Heaven, then quickly will I accept it, and quickly will I reward thee.' For sincerity and God are one and inseparable....

Thus does God desire sincerity. And not until one prays with sincerity does prayer have power to prevail with God. Spiritual salvation is a blessing from God that is given only to sincerity.

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### POST-BIBLICAL SACRED BOOKS IN AMERICA

In Europe no notable attempt has been made to create a new class of sacred prose literature. The text of the Bible has remained central, and has been the subject of careful scrutiny and commentary. Religious sentiment has found release in the composition of hymns, of which a vast number have been written, some doggerel, but a good many of a high poetic quality. It is no uncommon event to see in some weekly journal the publication of 'a new hymn for so-and-so'. Poems not primarily intended as hymns, such for example as Shelley's 'The world's great age begins anew', Emily Brontë's 'No coward soul is mine', and Thomas Hardy's *Magnificat*, have also been impressed into the service of Christian liturgy. Their authors would in some cases have been shocked and indignant at such a use of their words, but the historian of religion is much interested, as he is able to see the process of hymn-collecting actually at work, and it helps him to understand to some extent how collections such as those of the Hebrew Psalms and Indian Vedas came into being, for he has long felt that some of the compositions in these collections were not

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originally temple hymns, but the work of individualist poets. Moreover if Shelley is not counted unworthy to find a place in a Christian hymn book, one can understand why the Jews eventually consented to give the curiously agnostic Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) a place in the Old Testament.

In America the case has been somewhat different. The Protestant areas were colonized by Nonconformist Christians in a good many cases, and while these were sometimes sober folk of the Presbyterian or Independent type, others were Quakers, or members of some free-lance antinomian community, and the untutored reading of the Bible, plus emotionalism and hysteria, led to the development of rather peculiar communities. As Professor Schneider of New York has pointed out, myth-making has not come to an end, but has actually continued, and among the credulous and half-educated in many parts of the world has given rise to some most remarkable mythologies. Thus a new movement some years ago among the Karens of Burma bore some slight resemblance to the Montanist movement in Phrygia in the third century A.D., while among the South African Bantus desire for native church autonomy has led to the fabrication of strange new sects.

It is in the United States however that we find some of the most striking of these peculiar bodies. Thus we have the Brotherhood of the New Life, founded by Thomas Lake Harris, who taught that people by living in the closest community could open their minds and bodies to the Breath of God – the Holy Spirit – and so regenerate not only individuals but also society. Harris believed that 'in-breathing', which with him was a kind of substitute for sacraments, enabled him to gain prophetic insight into the future of history, and he believed that mankind would eventually be destroyed by being drawn into a vortex. Then there was Henry James, senior, the father of the novelist and of William James, who also developed a new dogmatic theology which somewhat impressed Emerson, and in which he taught that Creation was the Fall, and was the alienation of man from God by a series of descents into individualism. Spiritual socialism in this case constitutes redemption. This, as we can see, closely resembles the Marxist myth of our own day, and Professor Schneider has said that both James and Marx are really the product of earlier speculations

by Fourier and Saint-Simon. Finally we have the curious Negro sect known as A Peace Mission, in which the founder, Father Divine, is actually venerated as God himself. (For a slight analogy to this the reader is referred to the account of the nineteenth-century Japanese sect known as Konko Kyo.)

Two sects however claim special attention here, because they have produced what claim to be sacred books, not as contrary to the Bible but as supplements to it. The earlier of these is of somewhat doubtful origin.

(i) *The Book of Mormon*

The originator, Joseph Smith, was born in the state of Vermont in 1805. His family history reveals some religious peculiarities, and he himself, while a lad of eighteen, claimed to have received an angelic visitation and to have been henceforth guided by visions and voices. It has been stated on good authority that he was convicted of fraud in connexion with treasure-seeking in 1826. Whether or no he was subject to hallucinations, in 1830 he made a most stupendous claim, namely that he had been guided by an angel to the discovery of a number of gold plates inscribed with a historical record concerning the early inhabitants of America. The angel also provided him, he declared, with a special pair of glasses with which he could read and translate the inscriptions. He persuaded some friends to act as scribes, and they sat in front of a curtain while Smith dictated to them from the other side. They never saw the actual plates from which it was alleged that the record was being dictated, although some of them subsequently signed a statement that they had done so. On inquiry this statement was found to be somewhat evasive, and at least one of the signatories afterwards confessed that he had lied. In any case the plates themselves vanished, and have never been seen since.

Their alleged contents were published by Smith, and prove to be a sort of apocryphal work, rather less than the size of the canonical Old Testament, in which large sections of the Bible are reproduced, and woven into a narrative which professes to be an account of how in the years following the Captivity of the Jews, a portion of the lost Ten Tribes landed in America, and became divided into an ungodly and

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a pious tribe. About A.D. 400 the ungodly annihilated the pious, with the exception of a prophet named Mormon and his son Moroni. These men before their death hid in a cave a record of their people, engraved upon plates of gold, and it was the latter which Smith claimed to have discovered in 1827. The temptation to see in the North American Indians some remnants of the Lost Tribes was naturally a strong one, and although there is not the slightest shred of evidence in favour of it (since the ancestors of the Indians, although probably of Asiatic origin, penetrated to the American continent long centuries before the rise of Israel into being, and there is no evidence of any post-Exilic intrusion earlier than the time of Cortez), nevertheless it appealed to a good many who did not know any anthropology, and who had done no critical study of the Bible. There is reason to believe that Smith derived much of his material from an unpublished work of the imagination, written by a certain Solomon Spaulding, a Presbyterian minister in Western Pennsylvania, which somehow or other got into the hands of one Sidney Rigdon, a printer, who certainly played a large part in the history of the Mormons, and who was not only older, abler, and more educated than Smith, but turned preacher and became Smith's right-hand man. The so-called 'Book of Mormon' is divided into twenty-five books of varying length, and is written in the style of the Authorized Version of the Bible. The extract given below is a portion of the concluding Epistle of Moroni, which is a good deal of it in the style of such an early Christian sermon as the sub-apostolic Second Epistle of Clement of Rome. It is painfully easy to invent material of this sort, and the extracts show that the art of composing pseudepigrapha is by no means extinct, even among Christians of the nineteenth century.

### *Extract from the Epistle of Moroni, Chapter 7*

And now I, Moroni, write a few of the words of my father Mormon, which he spake concerning Faith, Hope and Charity; for after this manner did he speak unto the people, as he taught them in the synagogue which they had built for the place of worship.

And now I, Mormon, speak unto you, my beloved

brethren; and it is by the grace of God, the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and his holy will, because of the gift of his calling unto me, that I am permitted to speak unto you at this time.

Wherefore I would speak unto you that are of the Church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope, by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth, until ye shall rest with him in heaven.

And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable walk with the children of men;

For I remember the word of God, which saith, By their works ye shall know them; for if their works be good, then they are good also.

For behold, God hath said, A man being evil cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent, it profiteth him nothing.

For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness.

For behold, if a man being evil, giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God.

And likewise also is it counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray, and not with real intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing; for God receiveth none such;

Wherefore, a man being evil, cannot do that which is good; neither will he give a good gift.

For behold, a bitter fountain cannot bring forth good water; neither can a good fountain bring forth bitter water; wherefore a man being a servant of the devil, cannot follow Christ, and if he follow Christ, he cannot be a servant of the devil.

Wherefore all things which are good, cometh of God; and that which is evil, cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and

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inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually.

But behold, that which is of God, inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.

### (ii) *'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures'*

The story of this book is a very different one from the last. In Mary Baker Eddy we have a sincere and earnest amateur. No one can reasonably doubt that mind influences body to such a degree that an unsound mind can contribute towards a state of ill-health, while conversely a healthy mind, thinking straight and maintaining its balance, can contribute much to the well-being of the body. Mrs Eddy herself was what is commonly known as a 'psychic' individual. She was the daughter of a Calvinistic farmer, whose rigid belief in predestination so terrified her that she became neurotic, and was only relieved by her mother telling her to lean upon the love of God. It would seem that this crisis affected the whole of her subsequent career. For some time she behaved as a psychic individual might be expected to do. She went into trances, claimed to see visions, and practised telepathy. All the time however she was trying to cure her nervous ailments, which a psychologist might describe as a typical case of 'the ill-health of a mystic'. These ailments disappeared after an amateur psychotherapist had treated her with hypnosis and massage. Mrs Eddy would not accept the naturalistic explanation of her cure, but publicly attributed it, and also her recovery from concussion at a later date, to Divine healing, resulting from a devout reading of Matthew ix. 28. From this time onward she developed her teaching, and eventually wrote her book with the title given above. This book has passed through many editions and has been translated into other languages. The authoress maintains that God is all in all, and that since God is good and God is Mind or Spirit, therefore matter does not exist, or is at any rate a misperception of Mind by us. Evil, which is the antithesis of good and therefore of God, must also be unreal or

non-existent. Hence anyone who imagines himself to be ill is mis-perceiving the real situation, and needs to be relieved not so much of his sickness as of his mistaken thinking. The logic of this doctrine is real, even if it be naïve, and as a rationalization of genuine experience it has satisfied many. Faith in God as Loving, Righteous, and Omnipotent certainly helps people to overcome nervous diseases, and also enhances their vitality so as to enable them to conquer a number of physical afflictions. Not all will agree with Mrs Eddy's rejection of medical and surgical science as not merely useless and unnecessary, but as positively pernicious. She wrote and thought in isolation, drawing at will from various sources, and although she constructed a system which in her judgement accounted satisfactorily for all her experiences, she was too much of an individualist amateur to be in a position to judge of its total correctness. Her use of the Bible is typical. Sometimes she is quite naïve and uncritical, as when she sees in Revelation xii a prophecy of herself, and in Revelation x. 2 a prophecy of her book. She adds to her main work an appendix in which she ventures upon a homiletic exegesis of Genesis and Revelation which would not perhaps have displeased Sir Isaac Newton, and reminds us often of the early Christian Fathers. Yet she is in line with many modern commentators in treating Genesis i and ii as divinely inspired myths. Her own words are: 'The Scriptures are very sacred. Our aim must be to have them understood spiritually, for only by this understanding can truth be gained. The true theory of the universe, including man, is not in material history, but in spiritual development. Inspired thought relinquishes a material, sensual, and mortal theory of the universe, and adopts the spiritual and immortal.' This is not unlike what is to be found in the early second-century book known as the *Epistle of Barnabas*, or in some of the homilies of Origen.

Mrs Eddy is quite justly jealous of any misquotation of her book, and she always insisted that in translating it the original text should be given on the page opposite the translation. It will therefore be quite obvious that in giving an extract from it here one has no intention of creating a false impression by wresting a passage from its context, nor is it possible to express the whole of her teaching in one single detached extract. What is here appended is therefore merely a speci-

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men of the style and temper in which she writes. She believed herself inspired to write not a substitute for the Bible but a supplement to it and a means of interpreting it rightly, and as such her book is regarded with justifiable reverence by her followers. The book itself however is prolix, formless, and confused. It betrays its origin as proceeding from an untrained and self-educated mind. Excluding the glossary and Bible exegesis, it comprises fourteen chapters, parts of which are concerned with theological issues such as atonement, eucharist, prayer, and creation, parts with polemics against systems which the authoress has tried and discarded, and parts with the teaching and practice of her own system. Like Mohammed, Mrs Eddy repeats again and again the cardinal precepts of her message. She asserts rather than argues, and when she theologizes she shows confusion of thought. Nevertheless it does but little good to sneer at her work, as some have done. In many respects she was a pioneer, and the success of her movement is not to be explained away entirely as due to her astuteness and shrewd business capacity, but involves the recognition that she laid stress upon certain items in the Christian gospel which its official exponents have often allowed to fall into the background; while her doctrine of the material as a misperception of the spiritual has affinities with the teaching set forth by the late Sir Arthur Eddington, the eminent Quaker mathematician and astronomer, in his Swarthmore Lecture, where he affirms that the fabric of the entire universe is 'mind-stuff'.

The two passages from her book which are quoted here are:

(a) the statement in Chapter VI regarding the central revelation which she alleges has been made to her; (b) her positive declaration about medical services from Chapter VII.

It will be clear that Mrs Eddy uses the word 'science' in a special way of her own. As regards the origins of her doctrines about matter, some think that she owed not a little to the fact that at a time when her ideas were taking shape as a young girl, one of her brothers was reading philosophy at college, and that she picked up some ill-digested information from him about the philosophy of Plato. But this suggestion cannot be pressed, although it is by no means improbable.



(a) *From Chapter VI: Science, Theology, Medicine*

Whence came to me this heavenly conviction, – a conviction antagonistic to the testimony of the physical senses? According to St Paul, it was ‘the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power.’ It was the divine law of Life and Love, unfolding to me the demonstrable fact that matter possesses neither sensation nor life; that human experiences show the falsity of all material things; and that immortal cravings, ‘the price of learning love’, establish the truism that the only sufferer is mortal mind, for the divine Mind cannot suffer.

My conclusions were reached by allowing the evidence of this revelation to multiply with mathematical certainty and the lesser demonstration to prove the greater, as the product of three multiplied by three, equalling nine, proves conclusively that three times three duodecillions must be nine duodecillions – not a fraction more, not a unit less.

When apparently near the confines of mortal existence, standing already within the shadow of the death-valley, I learned these truths in divine Science: that all real being is in God, the divine Mind, and that Life, Truth, and Love are all-powerful and ever present; that the opposite of Truth – called error, sin, sickness, disease, death – is the false testimony of false material sense, of mind in matter; that this false sense evolves, in belief, a subjective state of mortal mind which this same so-called mind names *matter*, thereby shutting out the true sense of Spirit.

My discovery, that erring, mortal, misnamed *mind* produces all the organism and action of the mortal body, set my thoughts to work in new channels, and led up to my demonstration of the proposition that Mind is All and matter is naught as the leading factor in Mind-science.

Christian Science reveals incontrovertibly that Mind is All-

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in-all, that the only realities are the divine Mind and idea. This great fact is not, however, seen to be supported by sensible evidence, until its divine Principle is demonstrated by healing the sick and thus proved absolute and divine. This proof once seen, no other conclusion can be reached.

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(b) *From Chapter VII: Physiology*

You say that indigestion, fatigue, sleeplessness, cause distressed stomachs and aching heads. Then you consult your brain in order to remember what has hurt you, when your remedy lies in forgetting the whole thing; for matter has no sensation of its own, and the human mind is all that can produce pain.

As a man thinketh, so is he. Mind is all that feels, acts, or impedes action. Ignorant of this, or shrinking from its implied responsibility, the healing effort is made on the wrong side, and thus the conscious control over the body is lost.

The Mohammedan believes in a pilgrimage to Mecca for the salvation of his soul. The popular doctor believes in his prescription, and the pharmacist believes in the power of his drugs to save a man's life. The Mohammedan's belief is a religious delusion; the doctor's and pharmacist's is a medical mistake.

The erring human mind is inharmonious in itself. From it arises the inharmonious body. To ignore God as of little use in sickness is a mistake. Instead of thrusting Him aside in times of bodily trouble, and waiting for the hour of strength in which to acknowledge Him, we should learn that He can do all things for us in sickness as in health.

Failing to recover health through adherence to physiology and hygiene, the despairing invalid often drops them, and in

his extremity and only as a last resort, turns to God. The invalid's faith in the divine Mind is less than in drugs, air, and exercise, or he would have resorted to Mind first. The balance of power is conceded to be with matter by most of the medical systems; but when Mind at last asserts its mastery over sin, disease, and death, then is man found to be harmonious and immortal.

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### CONCLUSION: THE NEW CHRISTIANITY

It is outside the province of such a book as this and my previous volume\* to venture upon any prophecies as to the future developments of religion. The author can only note that the two most vital movements in the world at the moment are what has been called the New Christianity, and Marxism, which is dialectically related to it. Of the latter there is no space to speak. The former is of special interest because, while creating no new Bible, it has shown itself ready and willing to accept all that scientific criticism of the original Bible text is able to do by way of elucidating its meaning. Hence this New Christianity differs in some important respects from the old, having abandoned some doctrines no longer found to be tenable, and having brought itself much nearer to a close acquaintance with the historical Jesus and his contemporaries than previous generations of believers were able to be. If all denominations are taken together, a large part of the expansion of the Christian movement during the past fifty years may be said to have been effected by evangelists whose outlook has in some measure been controlled by this new attitude towards the Bible. New applications of Christian beliefs to social policy have also emerged during the same period, and are still emerging, sometimes in the most unlikely spots. One can think of the new housing programmes of the Spanish bishop of Malaga, and of the Christian co-operative movements in the Far East, as well as of the efforts to promote universal literacy in Africa.

\* *Comparative Religion* (Pelican Books).

## PART FOUR

We come back however almost to where we started, namely to the realization that the most widely distributed form of *sacred literature* is still the hymn, chanted by worshippers. We have seen that the Qur'ān owes much of its potency to its quasi-rhythmical form in Arabic, and to its suitability for recitation in a sort of singsong, while experience has shown that Hindus induce a kind of numinous atmosphere by *intoning* the words of their holy books. A Roman cardinal once said of the Lutheran Protestants: 'The people have sung themselves into heresy.' This is no new thing. It happened as far back as the fourth century of our era, when Arianism was diffused by metrical compositions which could be memorized and sung by workmen and even street-boys. In our own day, or more strictly speaking during the past 150 years, Christians have sung themselves into new and more vital and progressive expressions of their faith.

Let me end with five examples of these.

### (i) *From the new Anglican hymn book 'Songs of Praise'*

For this volume Dr Percy Dearmer (1867-1936) composed as many as twenty-four hymns, in which he sought to give a more modern expression to standard Christian ideas and beliefs. One of these, written for use in the weeks following Christmas Day, runs thus:

In Asia born, from Asia hailed,  
Was Christ, who God for us unveiled;  
The speech of God to man was He,  
His life one bright epiphany.

And still His children come from far,  
To hail from east and west His star;  
In Him all faiths and systems meet,  
All partial truth is made complete.

Bright Friend, thy face shines out to-day  
More real, more vivid, true, and gay:  
Then show Thy goodly Kingdom, Christ,  
The leaven, treasure, pearl unpriced.

SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

True gifts we'd offer to our King:  
Our myrrh as goodness we will bring,  
Our incense as the truth shall rise,  
Our gold be beauty's sacrifice.

(ii) *A poem by J. G. Whittier (1807-1892)*

This poem, written by the nineteenth-century American Quaker John Greenleaf Whittier, has found its way into hymn books in England.

Our Friend, our Brother, and Our Lord,  
What may Thy service be? –  
Nor name nor form, nor ritual word,  
But simply following Thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,  
We pile no graven stone;  
He serves Thee best who loveth most  
His brothers and Thy own.

Who hates, hates Thee; who loves becomes  
Therein to Thee allied;  
All sweet accords of hearts and homes  
In Thee are multiplied.

Thy litanies, sweet offices  
Of love and gratitude.  
Thy sacramental liturgies,  
The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift  
The vaulted nave around;  
In vain the minster turret lift  
Its brazen weights of sound:

PART FOUR

The heart must ring Thy Christmas bells,  
Thy inward altars raise;  
Its faith and hope Thy canticles,  
And its obedience praise.

(iii) *A hymn by the English Congregational minister*  
*C. Silvester Horne (1865-1914)*

For the might of thine arm we bless thee, our God, our  
fathers' God;  
Thou hast kept thy pilgrim people by the strength of thy  
staff and rod;  
Thou hast called us to the journey which faithless feet ne'er  
trod;  
For the might of thine arm we bless thee, our God, our  
fathers' God.

For the love of Christ constraining, that bound their hearts  
as one;  
For the faith in truth and freedom in which their work was  
done;  
For the peace of God's evangel wherewith their feet were  
shod;  
For the might of thine arm we bless thee, our God, our  
fathers' God.

We are watchers of a beacon whose light must never die;  
We are guardians of an altar that shows thee ever nigh;  
We are children of thy freemen who sleep beneath the sod;  
For the might of thine arm we bless thee, our God, our  
fathers' God.

May the shadow of thy presence around our camp be  
spread;  
Baptize us with the courage thou gavest to our dead;

SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

O keep us in the pathway their saintly feet have trod;  
For the might of thine arm we bless thee, our God, our  
fathers' God.

(iv) *A hymn for pioneer missionary gatherings, by  
Arthur Campbell Ainger (1841-1919)*

God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year;  
God is working his purpose out and the time is drawing  
near;

Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely  
be,

When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the  
waters cover the sea.

From utmost east to utmost west where'er man's foot hath  
trod,

By the mouth of many messengers goes forth the voice of  
God,

'Give ear to me, ye continents, ye isles, give ear to me,  
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God as the  
waters cover the sea.'

What can we do to work God's work, to prosper and  
increase

The brotherhood of all mankind, the reign of the Prince of  
Peace?

What can we do to hasten the time, the time that shall surely  
be,

When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the  
waters cover the sea?

March we forth in the strength of God with the banner of  
Christ unfurled,

That the light of the glorious gospel of truth may shine  
throughout the world;

#### PART FOUR

Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin, to set their captives  
free,  
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God as the  
waters cover the sea.

All we can do is nothing worth unless God blesses the deed;  
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide till God gives life to the  
seed;  
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall  
surely be,  
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the  
waters cover the sea.

(v) *A school hymn by Sir Frank Fletcher (1931)*

O Son of man, our hero strong and tender,  
Whose servants are the brave in all the earth,  
Our living sacrifice to thee we render,  
Who sharest all our sorrow, all our mirth.

O feet so strong to climb the path of duty,  
O lips divine that taught the words of truth,  
Kind eyes that marked the lilies in their beauty,  
And heart that kindled at the zeal of youth.

Lover of children, boyhood's inspiration,  
Of all mankind the servant and the king,  
O Lord of joy and hope and consolation,  
To thee our fears and joys and hopes we bring.

Not in our failures only and our sadness,  
We seek thy presence, comforter and friend;  
O rich man's guest, be with us in our gladness!  
O poor man's mate, our lowliest tasks attend!



SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD

(vi) *A hymn by George Matheson (1842-1906)*

Lest the foregoing should be thought to have about them something of the spirit of propaganda, let me close by giving some words of the blind Presbyterian poet George Matheson, who died during the first decade of the twentieth century. They too have found their place in *Songs of Praise*, though they strike a rather different note; but they will serve as a fitting sequel to this volume.

Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all;  
Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold.  
Rend each man's temple veil and bid it fall,  
That we may know that Thou hast been of old;  
Gather us in.

Gather us in: we worship only Thee;  
In varied names we stretch a common hand;  
In diverse forms a common soul we see;  
In many ships we seek one spirit-land;  
Gather us in.

Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light,  
Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven;  
Thou art the fulness of our partial sight;  
We are not perfect till we find the seven;  
Gather us in.

Thine is the mystic life great India craves;  
Thine is the Parsee's sin-destroying beam;  
Thine is the Buddhist's rest from tossing waves;  
Thine is the empire of vast China's dream;  
Gather us in.

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Thine is the Roman's strength without his pride;  
Thine is the Greek's glad world without its graves;  
Thine is Judaea's law with love beside,  
The truth that censures and the grace that saves;  
Gather us in.

Some seek a Father in the heavens above,  
Some ask a human image to adore;  
Some crave a Spirit vast as life and love:  
Within Thy mansions we have all, and more;  
Gather us in.



*"A book that is shut is but a block"*

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